Research Article

INVESTIGATION OF STUDENTS' POOR READING HABITS AND LATENESS TO SCHOOL BEHAVIOR: NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE AND ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to examine the problem solving techniques of school principals. In this context, students' reading habits and lateness behavior to school were examined by nominal group technique and root cause analysis. Assumptions of qualitative research methods were used in the study. In this regard, two different focus groups were created as a working group, and a total of 16 school principals were included in the study. Within the scope of the study, group work done according to the nominal group technique, and the results showed that technological tools negatively affect reading habits. Also, the lateness behavior of students was examined via five root cause analysis. The root problem was that parents did not recognize the benefits of going to bed early for schoolchildren. Recommendations developed within the scope of the study can be listed as follows: To increase student's reading habits, they need to be guided. Additionally, the reason for the lateness behavior of the students was that parents did not realize the benefits of going to bed early. In this context, school staff should help parents to build a strong educational culture in their houses.

Keywords: Problem solving techniques, school principals, reading habits, lateness behavior.

INTRODUCTION

One of the main roles of the school principals is to be able to operate the problem-solving process effectively. Schools, as an open system organization, are constantly facing problems that disrupt their internal balance. Problem-solving in schools is closely related to ensuring student attendance, more effective use of limited resources, and improving teachers' working conditions (Runkel, Schmuck, Arends, & Francisco, 1979). In this context, to carry out studies in line with the same objectives, school stakeholders are expected to reveal the causes of the problems based on cooperation in the light of the results obtained. Problem-solving is not a technical study that expresses only the causes of the undesired situation. It also requires guidance on what kind of measures should be taken in the short and long term to solve problems. In the related literature, it is seen that school principals exhibit specialized or ordinary approaches depending on their efforts to solve the problems (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1991, 1993). Ohde and Murphy (1993) argued that they should have experience in the definition of expertise. Frensch and Sternberg (1989) considered expertise as an ability to perform a practical task. Principals gain knowledge and experience about education management and leadership in processes such as school teaching and leading as vice principal. However, the ability of the school principal to transform this knowledge and experience into practical knowledge in solving problems is shown as the feature that differentiates them (Ohde & Murphy, 1993). However, knowledge and experience are not the only features that are considered in separating the school principal from ordinary problem-solving approaches. Studies indicated that managers, considered as an expert, are usually distinguished in two areas: describing the problem and interpreting the problem (Allison, 1996; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1994). The managers' personality *and t*echnological leadership self-efficacy could help the manager in order to interpret the problem (Çalık, Çoban & Özdemir, 2019).

It requires to start with a situation analysis to identify a problem, the causes of the problem, and the critical challenges to be faced. In some cases, defining the problem is the most difficult part of the problem-solving process (Hayes, 1981). In this context, some terms (analysis, diagnosis, evaluation, screening, etc.) are used. It is important to know how to identify the problem. The research on school principals by Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) mentions four problem areas: Problems concerning teachers, school work, students and their parents. An important point to keep in mind with a strategic planning perspective is that its analysis should not be limited to the scope of the education system. It should also cover the environment of the current system. In this respect, the analysis of demographic trends, economic systems, labor market, financial situation, and also socio-cultural structure are especially important. The school principal's monitoring task is an internal management process in which systematic information on implementation is collected and resolved to determine the strengths and weaknesses with which the necessary measures are taken to achieve the planned results (correction of problems or strengthening the successes) and the determination of strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring is done using different types of indicators chosen to measure in the medium term and in achieving the goals and objectives set in the annual action plans. The information collected in this way is analyzed, and the results are presented in the form of progress reports (also called review or performance

reports). These reports are reviewed periodically to analyze and discuss a performance report to make appropriate decisions about any action. Specific assessment reports may also be requested at specific times (especially at the end of the mid-term and/or planning cycle). These reports are generally different from regular review reports with more basic and in-depth analysis.

Group-Based Problem Solving Approaches

At the problem-solving stage, the school principal is expected to examine the characteristics of the group and to use a suitable technique. For example, some group members may have a higher speaking ability than others. This situation may prevent some members from revealing their views comfortably. In this context, those who cannot express their opinions in the group discussion can occur. Also, some group members may think quietly better. However, some group members may experience reservations because they are new in the team. Problem-solving techniques may be more appropriate when the subject requires an intense discussion and conflicts arise over the views of individuals. The nominal group technique is a method developed by Andre Delbecq and Andrew Van de Ven in 1968 to provide group interaction in the problem-solving process. This technique provides a process for achieving full and equal participation of the group members in decision-making processes and achieving a democratic consensus with the mathematical order of the votes that show an individual preference. For this reason, it prevents the individuals with dominant characteristics in the group to come to the fore with their ideas and influence others. This method used in decision-making in meetings can also be applied in various areas such as professional analysis and training needs analysis (Hermann, 1987; Zemke & Kramlinger, 1982).

Delbecq, Van de Ven and Gustafson (1975) emphasize that a question sentence should be determined at the first step of the implementation of the nominal group technique. Then, in response to this question, individual silent thinking is done and the group members prepare a list of their ideas. This step is followed by the moderator writing all the individual ideas on a piece of paper that can be easily seen by the group members. For this purpose, the moderator completes the group by taking one item from each person. Also, the group may be encouraged for additional items when the participants' ideas are over. Then, discussions are made to clarify the items listed by the moderator. The group members then sort the items in numerical order according to their preferred order. Group discussions are held on these rankings. Then, for the last time, a final ranking based on the second round of the votes is made in the order of individual preference. The nominal group technique may not be suitable for some group work. For example, if the purpose of the study is to exchange information, hear or negotiate different opinions, then the nominal group technique will not be appropriate for them. Besides, this technique has some limitations (Delbecq et al., 1975; Korhonen, 1990). When it is not intended to ensure a full consensus on an item, it can be seen that not all participants can participate in the final decision. Additionally, participants may try to prevent the process from being disturbed by their prejudices or the restrictions imposed on the discussion. Furthermore, depending on the time allocated to the individual idea-making phase, group members may have an emotional attitude to highlight their particular views and

experiences. Finally, the success of the study will depend on the moderator's ability to effectively address the process and suppress personal opinions or reactions that may hinder the group.

Administrators using the PACTP (Plan, Apply, Check, Take Precaution) cycle require the root cause for a more efficient ''apply'' step during the next cycle. In this context, the advantage of 5-reason analysis is that it is effective in defining the root cause. This method requires asking the question "why'' five times to find the root cause of a problem. This type of analysis was originally developed to analyze industrial phenomena but was later used in many areas including education (Miller & Maellaro, 2016; Sarkar, Mukhopadhyay, & Ghosh, 2013). After determining the root cause according to this analysis, the school staff prepares a work plan to prevent the problem from being repeated. Inclusion in an applicable plan may force school staff to develop appropriate solutions to the problem (Miller & Maellaro, 2016). Amo (1998) summarized the processing steps for 5 cause analysis: *(i)* The event to be analyzed is defined, *(ii)* A group is created to execute the 5 cause analysis, *(iii)* business processes are examined, *(iv)* data is collected, *(v)* causes are investigated, *(vi)* the application is started, and *(vii)* the results of the applications are evaluated.

Two Problem Areas in Schools: Students' Reading Habits and Lateness Behavior to School

Two problems were discussed in this study. The first one is about the reading habits of students. In 2011, the "Turkey Reading Culture Map" project was carried out by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism General Directorate (KYGM) of Libraries and Publications. In this research, aimed to determine the profile of the readers and trends in Turkey, interviews conducted with 6212 people from 26 provinces and varying ages between 7 and 65. According to project results, out of every four people in Turkey have reading habits. Also, it was found that an average of 7.2 books was read per person per year (KYGM, 2011). Studies show that students spend less time reading books out of school. For example, İşcan, Arıkan, and Küçükaydın (2013) conducted a study with second-grade students in primary schools, and it was revealed that students dedicate time to read mostly through in-school reading time, and do not discuss books that they read among themselves. Also, in this study, it was stated that the reasons such as television, an abundance of homework, and household chores were shown as an obstacle to reading. Furthermore, one of the reasons for poor reading habits is that the content of the book to be read does not attract the student. Research showed that students are more interested in novel and story genres (Deniz, 2015; Kuş & Türkyılmaz, 2010). These findings indicated that the content of the books to meet the needs of the reader promotes regular reading habits. Besides, it is essential to choose books with pictures to develop children's reading habits, and teachers need to read aloud in the classroom (Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard, 2000). The school principal has an impact on student behavior directly and indirectly through teachers. Silva, White, and Yoshida (2011) conducted a study revealing the direct effect of the school principal on the reading habits of the students. In this study, the school principals conducted one-to-one interviews with the students and informed them about the benefits of reading, set goals with them, and followed their reading performance. As a result of the study, it was observed that the reading habits of the

students improved. Additionally, the school principal may have an indirect impact on the reading culture by planning activities related to reading habits in the school.

Secondly, the students' lateness to school behavior was examined. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) limited students' lateness behavior to a limited period during the first class. According to the regulation, the attendance of late students and the period that they can attend the class is decided by the teachers' board at the beginning of the year and announced to parents and students (MoNE, 2017). Parents are responsible for ensuring the attendance of the students. Research indicates that students' lateness to school behavior seen as unwanted behavior by school principals (Nezihoğlu & Sabancı, 2010). Özbaş (2010) found that the most significant reason for lateness to school behavior for both children and parents was that the child could not prepare for school on time. Furthermore, climatic conditions according to the season, students' perceptions of courses as worthless, and familial or individual problems cause not attending class.

In recent years, principals' behavior, which focuses on the needs of disadvantaged students and aims to increase their access to education and develop academic achievement, examined (Murtadha & Watts, 2005; Özdemir, 2017; Özdemir, 2019). This study investigated how school principals solved problems related to students' reading habits and lateness to school behavior. The problem-solving techniques used by school principals to solve these problems will be expected to guide other school principals in the field. This study aims to show how school principals encourage good reading habits in students and reduce their lateness behavior.

METHOD

Research Design

This study focuses on the analysis of the causes of two problems by using problem-solving techniques of school principals. The assumptions of qualitative research were used in the study. This case study is about principals' views on students' reading habits and lateness behavior to understand the reason for their behavior. The research question asks to describe some contemporary circumstances (e.g., "how" or "why" some social phenomenon works), the more that case study research will be relevant. Case studies also are relevant the more that the research questions require a comprehensive and "in-depth" explanation of some social phenomenon (Yin, 2018).

Participants

For the qualitative data of the study, criterion sampling and maximum variation sampling were used. Criterion sampling includes choosing cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2001). The maximum variation sampling applied to provide the representativeness and diversity of individual practitioners (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2017). In this context, it was taken into consideration that the principals who would be qualified for qualitative research should have a minimum of four years of office in

the selection of the principals. Moreover, the school principals were assigned to serve in different provinces and educational levels. Thus, data from various principals with different school conditions were gathered to provide sampling diversity. In line with these criteria, two different focus groups in which the researchers were moderators were formed and a total of 16 school principals included in the study in the 2017-2018 academic year. Two studies were completed in four hours. 13 males (81%) and 3 females (19%) were the participants of the study. Besides, 56% of the participants work in secondary education and 44% in middle school. Approximately half (56%) of them have over 20 years of management experience.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The data of the study were collected by two semi-structured forms developed by the researcher and by using a focus group study technique. During the creation of the problem area in semi-structured forms, the related literature was reviewed and school principals' views included in the form. Three field experts were asked for the outline of the forms designed in this direction. The form, which was prepared as a result of the feedback obtained from the experts, was applied to two school principals in terms of pre-application and it was determined that there was no problem in understanding, interpreting, and answering the questions. After all these steps, final forms were determined. Accordingly, the problem area and problem-solving technique used in data collection instruments are given in Table 1.

Tablo 1. Problem Area and Problem Solving Technique Used in Data Collection Instruments

	Problem Area	Problem Solving Technique
1	Poor reading habits of students	Nominal Group Technique
2	Students' lateness behavior	5 Reasons Analysis

According to Table 1, in the first data collection instrument, as a problem area 'Poor reading habits of students' were included. To solve this problem, the use of a nominal group technique was conducted. In the second 'Students' lateness behavior' was held. In the focus group study on nominal group technique, paper and pencil were prepared for each participant. First of all, group members have been given what the problem area is in writing. It was then given an average of ten minutes to allow participants to think quietly. Each member of the group is provided to express an idea respectively. One participant was asked to record these ideas on a large paper (flipchart). No discussion or questioning was allowed in this process. This practice continued for about two hours. On the other hand, to find the root cause of the problem, the members of the group were asked the question ''why'' five times in the 5 reasons analysis. This practice continued for about two hours. After the group work, a question was asked about how the school principals were able to solve these problems.

Data Analysis

For the study, qualitative data obtained according to the problem solving technique were evaluated by using descriptive analysis which is one of the qualitative data analysis techniques (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). At this stage, a descriptive analysis was performed based on the written statements of the participants. Also, it was aimed to contribute to the external validity of the research by giving a place to the participants' statements directly. On the other hand, to increase the internal validity of the research, the field expert was consulted on the subject of research and the researcher in the qualitative research method. Participant confirmation was also applied to the internal validity of the study. To contribute to the reliability of the study, a different researcher was asked for help and a group's data was requested to be analyzed and coded. Afterwards, the researchers obtained a comparison between the findings and it was observed that there was an agreement between them.

FINDINGS (RESULTS)

Data, collected in two different focus groups, were presented under two themes. In the first theme, findings related to the reading habits of the students and in the second theme the findings of their lateness behavior presented.

Theme 1: Investigation of Reading Habits by Nominal Group Technique

In this sub-section, seven school principals who participated in the focus group study were presented the problem statement: ''poor reading habits of students''. School principals were asked to analyze this problem with the nominal group technique. The reasons added to the flipchart in the idea generation stage were discussed in order and prioritization was provided. Each group member was asked to score from 1 to 8 points for prioritization, and they were asked to distribute these scores starting from the most important item. In this context, the reasons affecting the students' reading habits according to the nominal group technique and the distribution of the scores given by the school principals for each reason are given in Table 2.

Tablo 2. Factors Affecting the Reading Habits of Students According to Nominal Group Technique

Reason	Individuals							Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
Lack of reading habits of parents	8	4	5	6	4	6	8	41
No budget allocation for the book	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	8
Technological tools removing students from reading books	5	5	6	8	5	7	7	43
Not completing the literacy process	3	3	2	3	2	4	3	20
Lack of fitting the contents of the reading books and the student's wishes	7	6	4	4	6	2	4	33

The length of time the family spent watching television is too long	6	7	7	5	7	8	5	45
Student's not finding the book he/she wants	2	1	3	2	3	3	2	16
Lack of enough visibility of Contents appropriate for book stimulation in the media	4	8	8	7	8	5	6	46
Total	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	252

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the most important reason for the school principals is that: '' Lack of enough visibility of contents appropriate for book stimulation in the media''. This was followed by ''The length of time the family spent watching television is too long'' and ''Technological tools prevent students from reading books'' respectively. When the data are evaluated, it is understood that technology tools are an important problem area in terms of the formation of reading habits. When the suggestions about the problem of ''students' poor reading habits'' are asked to the school principals answered like this: conducting a seminar about reading habits, organizing a book reading festival among the parents, teachers' spending time for reading in the classroom, inviting the authors to the school, and organizing a conversation and preparation of public information on reading. For example, For instance, a principal worked in an elementary school answered the question as below:

> *"I choose a book to attract students' attention and enter the class. While reading the book, I use a tone that will draw the students' attention to the text I read. I'm going to stop reading the book in the full exciting place. I want them to read the rest of the book when they see the students waiting in curiosity."*

It is worth noting that a school principal worked in an elementary school pointed out the importance of identifying a student-level book:

> *"A book such as a story, novel, fairy tale, which will be taught at the class level, is determined by a commission formed by teachers each month. We ensure that the book is read in the classroom and after discussions with the students."*

On the other hand, a school principal who is in the 15th year in the profession stressed that reading activities should not be offered to students as punishment.

> *"The reason for the poor reading habits of the students is that the modelled individuals in the family do not read. The other reason is that the parents or teachers tell students 'read a book as punishment' after an undesired behavior of the child. Students should not consider reading as a punishment. On the contrary, successful students should be rewarded with a book. This makes students realize that a book is an award. For example, there have been many birthday celebrations at school. None of the students give each other books as gifts. Besides, the students*

are biased toward the reading activities given as homework. That's why we need to make book-reading activities enjoyable. Attending in reading activities accompanied by light music in the schoolyard positively affects the students. The fact that there are book reading parties in the school, as well as birthday parties and the participation of students with their favorite books, will increase their interest."

A school principal, who is in his 14th year in the profession, emphasized that reading habits need to begin in the family first.

"The child does not see anyone reading at home. If parents read as a role model, this becomes behavior in a child. The child learns the importance of reading at school, but this behavior is not reinforced at home. A reading-time should be done with the whole family. We provide them with reading hours, but that's not enough. A similar application can be done at home. Another problem is what the child will read. Inspirational books should be chosen that interest the student. We are enriching our library at our school. We've increased the number of books. Also, we take into account what the students' favorite books are. Something like this can be done at home. Instead of buying toys for the child, books that interest the child can be bought. I think that a reading culture needs to be created at home.''

Theme 2: Investigation of Students' Lateness Behavior According to 5 Reasons (root cause) Analysis

Nine school principals who participated in the focus group study were presented with a problem sentence like this: ''Students' being late to the class in the mornings''. School principals were asked to analyze this problem with 5 reasons (root cause) analysis and reveal the root cause. In this respect, the answer to the first reason was also considered as the question of the second reason. In this context, the reasons for students' lateness behavior according to 5 reasons (root cause) technique are given in Table 3.

Tablo 3. Five Reasons (Root Cause) according to the Analysis of Reasons for Students' Lateness Behavior

No.	Reason	Why did this situation occur?
Reason 1	Why do the students come to school late?	They can't wake up early.
Reason 2	Why can't they get up early?	They go to bed late.
Reason 3	Why do they go to bed late?	They always watch TV.
Reason 4	Why do they always watch TV?	Their parents don't warn them
Reason 5	Why their parents do not warn them?	Parents do not know the benefits of going to bed early.

According to Table 3, it is seen that the answer to the question of why the students come late to school is because they can't wake up early. This answer is also indicated as a question in the reason line 2. According to in 2 students' going to bed late is also shown as an answer. However, in the reason line 3, the reason for going

to bed late is the habit of watching TV. According to the school principals who stated that watching TV of the students was caused by the parents. According to the principals, parents are not aware of the benefits of going to bed early, and this creates a problem area.

It was understood that school principals had different strategies to reduce students' lateness to school behavior. In this context, measures were taken to attend the students to their education process. A school principal emphasized that the parents were contacted and the parents discussed the issue. Also, another school principal summarized the strategies and practices he used:

> *"Parents were informed about school rules. The reasons why the students were late were emphasized. The students were informed about the importance of coming to school on time. Sixteen students who came to school were considered to be late and the number of students arriving late went to four students. Guidance work was provided for these students."*

On the other hand, a school principal, who was working in elementary school and who was in his fifth year in the profession, underlined that being late for school was due to unplanned family behavior.

> *"Problems such as lack of a regular sleeping habit of the parents, out-of-home activities, parents working in shifts create a lack of authority at home. Children who are not interested in school have lateness behavior. The student and his/her family should not watch the show until late in the evening and should not stay out of home for long. Parents should make a plan with the school and follow it."*

Similarly, a school principal, who was working in an elementary school and who was in his sixth year in the profession, stated that the lateness behavior was because of the parenting problems.

> *"Some parents are careless when preparing their children for school. There are parents who do not prepare the child in the morning. In fact, most of those who are late are not coming to school all day long because they are late for service. The vast majority of our students come with vehicles from remote locations. Particularly a few parents also have this problem. So when the child can not go to the vehicle in time, they are automatically late. As I said, there are a few parents in our school that do this. We take precautions on this. We invite these parents to our school and tell them about the sensitivity of the issue. We guide the parents."*

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

Within the scope of the study, the students were asked to examine the reading habits and lateness behavior with nominal group technique and 5 reasons (root cause) analysis. According to the school principals, it was found that their parents had an important role in the students' reading habits. This finding is consistent with previous research findings. Yılmaz and Darıcan (2015) found that books that were read by students' parents in

the infancy and early childhood periods of them have a positive effect on their reading habits. One possible reason for the parents to be an important factor in the reading habits of students is that parents cannot plan their children's activities out-of-the school. For example, İşcan et al. (2013) found that television, homework, and household chores were the main factors deterring students from reading. Additionally, Balcı (2009) concluded that the students' reading of habits mostly encouraged by their parents and teachers. In this context, it may be that the genre and story types are formed in the form of events that attract students' attention and that the language is relatively more comprehensible than other types of writing. Accordingly, the fact that books are of a content that will meet the needs of the reader can be considered as an important quality that encourages regular reading habits. Besides, it is stated that it is important for the children to have a picture reading and the teachers' reading out loud in the classroom (Jacobs, Morrison & Swinyard, 2000). The results of the PISA 2009 study showed that when the parents did not see reading as a waste of time and talked about what they read with their children, their children had higher reading skills achievement scores (Şengül Avşar & Yalçın, 2015). Therefore, the findings of our study support the arguments that parents are relatively effective in their children' acquiring reading habits.

Within the scope of the study, the reason that prevents the reading habit of the students is that the content of the book and the needs of the student do not match. This finding is consistent with the recommendations made by Dökmen (1994) for acquiring the reading habit. It is also supported by previous research findings that students are more interested in the novel and story genre (Deniz, 2015; Kuş & Türkyılmaz, 2010). In this context, the genres of novels and stories are formed in the form of events that attract students' interest and their language is relatively more comprehensible than other types of writing, which may make these genres more preferable. Accordingly, the content of the books to meet the needs of the reader can be considered as an essential feature that promotes reading habits. Moreover, it is stated that it is vital for children's development that books with pictures and teachers read aloud in the classroom (Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard, 2000). In shortly, the characteristics of books and the methods used by teachers to make them popular are important to improve students' reading habits.

Another finding in this study is that the reason for students' lateness behavior is that the parents do not know the benefits of going to bed early. One of the variables that make the student succeed in school is the family. It offers a multidimensional complex structure with some qualities that can be improved, as well as features that cannot be altered in the short and medium-term, such as family income and education level of parents. These developed features are often conceptualized as the family's educational culture (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). The child's home-based educational culture includes parents 'parenting style, parents' expectation that their children will work at school, teaching support to the child, active participation of parents about school curricula, and monitoring the schoolwork of their children. These variables also directly affect the social and intellectual capital that enable students to succeed in school (Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). In this context, it is frequently emphasized that the level of participation of parents in the education of their children is an important variable related to reducing the differences due to socioeconomic status and family background

as well as providing benefit to all students (Epstein & Dauber, 2001; Jeynes, 2005). Therefore, it is of utmost importance that school staff helps parents to build a strong educational culture in their homes to reduce the gap in achievement between advantageous and disadvantaged groups. Research shows that students may show undesired behaviors such as being late when they are not supervised by their parents (Onoyase, 2017). According to the findings of our study and the previous studies in the literature, one of the important factors in reducing the late-school behavior of the student is the parents who help their children plan their time.

SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions developed within the scope of the research can be listed as follows; (i) to increase children's reading habits, they should be consulted by their parents, (ii) additionally, it was concluded that the reason for being late to school behavior of the students was that the parents who have lack of knowledge about the benefits of going to bed early. Therefore, school stakeholders such as teachers, principal, counselor etc. should build parents' capacity in order to create a strong learning environment for their children.

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