Procrastination, Workload and Managerial Resourcefulness of School Principals

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Abstract

Procrastination is unnecessarily delaying starting, completing, and maintaining a task, even when the person has the required tools, skills, or authority to conduct that task. The workload that needs to be handled by the school principals can be overwhelming and can cause a delay in tasks being fulfilled by the principals. School principals should have a range of management competencies to run schools more efficiently. These traits include the principals' leadership styles, decision-making processes, or personal traits. While evaluating the procrastination and workload of school principals, their management resourcefulness, and how it interacts with the other factors should also be evaluated. Principals' determination to achieve their goals and purposes has a positive impact in terms of decreasing procrastination behavior. The paper first provides a discussion on how procrastination as a concept has been understood in the literature. Then, it discusses how other researchers have investigated the issue of procrastination in principals, paying attention to how workload and management resourcefulness have factored into previous studies. This study tries to determine the relationships between school principals' procrastination, workloads, and managerial resourcefulness employing the survey method. Data were collected using an online form that included 3 scales: the procrastination behavior scale of school administrators, the role-based workload scale, the managerial resourcefulness scale. Responses from 300 school principals were analyzed. Findings indicate that school principals' procrastination level is high, they perceive low workload, and they do not have satisfactory levels of managerial resourcefulness. It has been revealed that as principals' workload and management resourcefulness increase, their procrastination levels decrease. This study found that resourceful management styles prevented principals' from feeling overwhelmed by their workload and meant that they were less likely to procrastinate. Moreover, this research has observed that male school principals are more task-oriented than female principals. No difference was determined according to branch, education, location, and seniority.

Keywords: Procrastination, Workload, Managerial resourcefulness, School principals.

Okul Müdürlerinin Erteleme, İş Yükü ve Yönetimsel Yeterliliği

Özet

Erteleme, kişi o görevi yerine getirmek için gerekli araçlara, becerilere veya yetkiye sahip olsa bile, bir göreve başlamayı, tamamlamayı ve sürdürmeyi gereksiz bir şekilde geciktirmektir. Okul müdürleri tarafından üstlenilmesi gereken iş yükü bunaltıcı olabilir ve müdürler tarafından yerine getirilen görevlerde gecikmeye neden olabilir. Okul müdürleri, okulları daha verimli yönetebilmek için bir dizi yönetim yetkinliğine sahip olmalıdır. Bu özellikler, müdürlerin liderlik tarzlarını, karar verme süreçlerini veya kişisel özelliklerini içerir. Okul müdürlerinin erteleme davranışları ve iş yükleri değerlendirilirken, yönetim beceriklilikleri ve diğer faktörlerle nasıl etkileşime girdiği de değerlendirilmelidir. Müdürlerin amaç ve amaçlarına ulaşma kararlılığı, erteleme davranışını azaltma açısından olumlu bir etkiye sahiptir. Makale ilk olarak ertelemenin bir kavram olarak literatürde nasıl anlaşıldığına dair bir tartışma sunmaktadır. Daha sonra, diğer araştırmacıların iş yükü ve yönetim becerikliliğinin önceki çalışmalara nasıl etki ettiğine dikkat ederek müdürlerde erteleme konusunu nasıl araştırdıklarını tartışmaktadır. Bu çalışma, okul müdürlerinin erteleme davranışları, iş yükleri ve

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yönetsel beceriklilikleri arasındaki ilişkileri tarama yöntemiyle belirlemeye çalışmaktadır. Veriler, 3 ölçek içeren çevrimiçi bir form kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Bu ölçekler, okul yöneticilerinin erteleme davranışları ölçeği, role dayalı iş yükü ölçeği, yönetsel beceriklilik ölçeğidir. 300 okul müdürünün cevapları analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, okul müdürlerinin erteleme düzeylerinin yüksek olduğunu, iş yükünü düşük düzeyde algıladıklarını ve tatmin edici düzeyde yönetsel becerilere sahip olmadıklarını göstermektedir. Müdürlerin iş yükü ve yönetim becerikliliği arttıkça, erteleme seviyelerinin azaldığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışma, yeterli yönetim tarzlarının, müdürlerin iş yüklerinden bunalmış hissetmelerini engellediğini ve erteleme olasılıklarının daha düşük olduğu anlamına geldiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca bu araştırma, erkek okul müdürlerinin kadın müdürlere göre daha fazla görev odaklı olduğunu gözlemlemiştir. Branş, eğitim, yer ve kıdem durumuna göre fark belirlenmemiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Erteleme, İş yükü, Yönetimsel beceriklilik, Okul müdürleri.

Introduction

The issue of procrastination in education institutions is a prevalent one. At the level of school administration, procrastination from principals can mean a delay in vital school programming and functions. As principal's take on more work as administrators, it has been argued that feeling overwhelmed can contribute to procrastination. However, it has also been argued that if principals possess management styles that emphasize resourcefulness, they are less likely to be overwhelmed by their workload. To tackle the issue of procrastination behavior in principals, the paper will first provide a discussion on how procrastination as a concept has been understood in the literature. Then, there will be a discussion of how other researchers have investigated the issue of procrastination in principals, paying attention to how workload and management resourcefulness have factored into previous studies.

This study aims to determine the relationships between school principals' procrastination, workloads, and managerial resourcefulness. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

- 1. To what extent do school principals procrastinate?
- 2. To what extent do school principals have workloads?
- 3. To what extent do school principals have managerial resourcefulness?
- 4. What are the relationships between school principals' procrastination, workloads, and managerial resourcefulness?

Literature Review

Procrastination is a behavior that has existed in human history from the beginning of time. This is demonstrated through ancient Greek and Roman military documents and religious scripts that date at least 3,000 years ago (Steel, 2007). However, this behavior has been conceptualized in more modern times (Ferrari, Johnson, and McCown, 1995). According to Yavuz and Özdemir (2013), even though this behavior is rather common and negatively affects people, giving a universally agreed-upon definition is not possible. Some of the definitions given for this phenomenon are as an act of delaying a task (Ellis and Knaus, 1977, cited by Galue, 1990) or avoiding doing a task (Noran, 2000), and some see it as a delay in completion of a task or completion of it with unsatisfactory results (Johnsonn, Green & Klauver, 2000). Queen and Queen (2004) describe this phenomenon as a "time bandit" that encourages you to

put off tasks, meetings, assignments, or a seminar to a later time, and is caused by a person's inability to take on tasks that are within their capacity to fulfill them. According to Cömert and Dönmez (2019), procrastination is unnecessarily delaying starting, completing, and maintaining a task, even when the person has the required tools, skills, or authority to conduct that task.

Even though academic procrastination and its implication for education have been discussed in the literature, no experiment has been conducted that could define the core reasoning behind the behavior. However, a correlation between procrastination and anxiety levels (Onwuegbuzie, 2004), difficulties in following orders (Rothblum, et al. 1986), perfectionism (Foster, 2007), personal attitude towards tasks (Lay, 1992), and goals (Scher and Osterman, 2002) have been observed in other research. In the literature, most studies on procrastination behaviors in academia focused on college student behaviors before doing their exams or submitting their term papers (Johnson, et al. 2000). However, this research will try to analyze the procrastination behavior of school principals. Moreover, the workload and management resourcefulness levels of the principals, and their relationship with procrastination behavior, will also be evaluated.

In the literature, research has been conducted on the procrastination behavior of school principals. Odhiambo (2001) stated that research conducted on secondary school principals in Kenya indicated principals perceive procrastination as a weakness that affects the operation of their respective schools. Moreover, another research in Nairobi on the same subject by Tirop (2003), observed that procrastination takes up a significant proportion of the principal's time. 55% percent of the school principals participating in the research responded that they put off the tasks which are unpleasant for them. Most principals agreeing to put off unpleasant tasks represents a concerning result, since a notable number of administrative tasks conducted by the principals can be seen as unpleasant. In this research, Tirop observes procrastination as a factor that inhibits poor time management by principals, which is important for the functioning of schools. Therefore, he concludes that for a school to achieve its goals and function in an ideal manner, the procrastination of principals should be managed, and time management skills should be emphasized.

Besides procrastination, the workload is also an important problem. According to research (West, Peck, Reitzug, Crane, 2014), the workload of principals is gradually expanding with new expectations on supervision and evaluation, changing legislative mandates, and increasing demand for accountability. Therefore, it can be claimed that the workload that needs to be handled by the school principals can be overwhelming and can cause a delay in tasks being fulfilled by the principals. Klocko and Wells (2015) conducted a study on "common stressors," and how they are perceived by the school administrators. In this study, they observed that many of the school principals responded to their increasing workload with stress and anxiety, which led to physical or psychological problems in some cases. Moreover, principals stated that the workload, due to their positions and roles in school management, is one of the reasons for their stress and anxiety.

According to Beycioğlu, Uğurlu, and Abdurrezzak (2018), almost all of the school principals that they interviewed reported their workload as one of the main reasons for their procrastination. They have stated that they are carrying more responsibility than they can handle, and they are demonstrating procrastination behavior, due to the amount of work they

have to complete. According to Beycioğlu, Uğurlu, and Abdurrezzak, due to this workload, principals had to prioritize some work, which was perceived more urgent or crucial by them over others and had to delay the non-urgent or non-critical work. Therefore, while looking at the procrastination behavior in school principals, their workload due to their position and roles should be taken into account as a contributing factor.

Queen and Queen (2004) examined school principals' tendency to exhibit procrastination while performing different types of tasks. In their research, they established procrastination as a frequent behavior among principals, due to their overwhelming workload, as was observed in the results of this research. However, it is seen that the level of procrastination is not the same in every task, and principals tend to delay the bigger projects more than the smaller items on their list. Therefore, Queen and Queen's research found a directly proportional relation between procrastination and the workload of the school principals. According to them, as the professors' workload increases, they have a higher tendency to procrastinate to begin, complete, or maintain their tasks. Research conducted by Dönmez and Cömert (2019) observed a different relation to this issue between genders. According to their research, women school principals tend to perceive their workload as less than their men colleagues. Therefore, they tend to procrastinate less due to their workload.

Dönmez and Cömert (2019) stated that while evaluating the relationship between procrastination and the workload of principals, different perceptions on these factors among administrators and teachers should be taken into account, as suggested in studies on procrastination. According to them, many of the school principals expressed that their workload does not have an impact on their procrastination and tasks being completed in their respective schools on time. However, teachers in the research stated as the workload of the principals increased, completion of tasks has delayed further and principals' procrastinated more. Dönmez and Cömert's research reflects the need to take the perception of workload and procrastination both by the principals and teachers while researching these concepts since there is a possibility that they might give varying results.

Nkwoh (2011) states that school principals should have a range of management competencies for schools to be run more efficiently. These traits include the principals' leadership styles, decision-making processes, or personal traits. Therefore, while evaluating the procrastination and workload of school principals, their management resourcefulness, and how it interacts with the other factors should also be evaluated. According to Yavuz and Özdemir (2013), procrastination can be caused due to management traits, rather than the workload of the principals. In their research, some of the management traits that can cause procrastination have been identified as a lack of purpose, determination, goal, or concentration. Therefore, it can be stated that principals' determination to achieve their goals and purposes has a positive impact in terms of decreasing procrastination behavior.

Uğurlu (2013) observed a relationship between the decision-making process of principals and their tendencies to procrastinate. According to him, multiple decision-making processes could be observed in a school principal, such as rational, intuitive, dependent, avoidant, and spontaneous. In this research, Uğurlu observed that avoidant principals tended to procrastinate and delay their work the most, whereas principals with rational decision-making processes acted more cautious and exhibited procrastination the least. Therefore, it can be

concluded that Uğurlu found a reciprocal proportional relationship between the procrastination levels and cautious behavior, as principals procrastinate less when they are more cautious.

According to Rajbhandari, Rajbhandari, and Loock (2016), there are two different leadership behavioral styles for a school principal: relations and task-oriented behavior styles. For Cheng (1991) the relations behavior style is concerned with people and interpersonal relations, whereas task-oriented behavior is concerned with production and task management. Therefore, if a school principal prioritizes the completion of tasks and neglects human relations, their behavior can be characterized as task-oriented leadership.

Women may fit into relations behavior in their management style more, while men show task-oriented behaviors. Durmus (2001), points out the fact that this difference can be caused by society's expectations of women and men. According to Durmuş, women are expected to be more gentle, understanding, and careful about others' feelings for cultural and sociological reasons. Meanwhile, men are expected to be ambitious, independent, and successful. Therefore, for Durmuş, expectations put on gender roles can lead to women being more accommodating than men.

It was observed in a study conducted on bank managers by Aykan (2004) that women employees were more tolerant and focused on interpersonal relations whereas men were more authoritarian and task-oriented. Eagly and Johnson (1990) also approached the conclusion of men being more task-oriented with suspicion and claimed that a general comparison between women and men cannot be easily made in terms of their management styles. In their research, they observed that men who are in a higher position, such as upper management, are more likely to be more task-oriented than their women colleagues in the same position. However, the same outcome could not be reached among the lower or middle management positions. It was observed as the position and duties of men diminished, task-orientation between them and their women colleagues have reversed.

Method

To determine the relationships between school principals' procrastination, workloads, and managerial resourcefulness, the survey method was employed. All (about 2200; MEB, 2020) the school principals in Şanlıurfa, Turkey were asked to complete an online form. Among them, 316 volunteered to fill the form. After careful elaboration of the researcher, 16 responses were eliminated due to missing and inconsistent answers. The remaining 300 responses were analyzed. The demographics of the school principals responded correctly are presented in Table 1.

The online form included 3 scales. The Procrastination Behavior Scale of School Administrators was developed by Cömert and Dönmez (2018) consisting of 14 five-point Likert-style items. It is unidimensional. The reliability coefficient calculated with the data collected in this study was $\alpha = 0.79$. An example item from the scale is "There are delays in the preparation of teacher shift schedules." The Role-Based Workload Scale was developed by Reilly (1982) and adapted to Turkish by Cömert and Dönmez (2018). It has 9 five-point Likert style items and unidimensional. The reliability coefficient calculated with the data collected in this study was $\alpha = 0.86$. One of the items is "I can't finish any job." The Managerial

Resourcefulness Scale was developed by Kanungo and Menon (2004) and adapted to Turkish by Ersözlü (2012). It has 15 five-point Likert style items and 3 dimensions: Task Focus (action-oriented competencies), Equanimity and Deliberation (emotional competencies), Perseverance (intellectual competencies). The reliability coefficient calculated with the data collected in this study was $\alpha = 0.77$. An example item is "When solving a problem, I make it relatively easy to concentrate on the task at hand, leaving my emotions aside."

Table 1. Demographics of the school principals

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender -	Male	274	91.3
Gender –	Female	26	8.7
Branch	Classroom	108	36.0
	Branch	192	64.0
Education	Bachelor's	270	90.0
	Graduate	30	10.0
	Rural	66	22.0
Location	County	166	55.3
	City center	68	22.7
-	1-5	47	15.9
	6-10	56	18.9
Seniority (years)	11-15	67	22.6
-	16-20	59	19.9
	21-40	67	22.6

Results

The mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness statistics of the scales were presented in Table 2. Since kurtosis and skewness values are near to zero, except for the Task Focus dimension of the Managerial Resourcefulness Scale, except for task focus all the dimensions are close to the normal distribution. All the scales are in five-point Likert style, so a mean closer to 5 represents a high level of related variable, and a mean closer to 1 represents a low level. School principals' procrastination level is high (Mean=4.33, SD=0.45). They perceive little workload (Mean=2.49, SD=0.75). The dimensions of the Managerial Resourcefulness Scale have below-average means. Therefore, it can be implied that school principals do not have satisfactory levels of managerial resourcefulness.

Table 2. The statistics of the scales

	Mean	SD	Kurtosis	Skewness
Procrastination	4.33	0.45	-0.90	1.42
Workload	2.49	0.75	0.45	-0.16
Task Focus	1.95	0.60	1.20	3.22
Equanimity and Deliberation	2.91	0.63	0.06	0.38
Perseverance	2.06	0.72	0.70	0.67

The relationships between school principals' procrastination, workloads, and managerial resourcefulness were calculated using Pearson correlation estimation. The results can be seen in Table 3. All the correlations between dimensions are statistically significant (p<0.05) but

weak (r<0.50). School principals' procrastination and workload levels are correlated negatively (r=-0.39, p<0.001).

Table 3. Correlation matrix

	Workload	Task Focus	Equanimity and Deliberation	Perseverance
Procrastination	-0.39**	-0.34**	-0.15*	-0.29**
Workload		0.46**	0.34**	0.43**

^{*}p<0.05, **p<0.001

In the sub-dimension of task focus, a difference was found according to gender (U = 2604, p <0.05). It was determined that males (Mean=1.97, SD=0.61) were more task-oriented than females (Mean=1.71, SD=0.46). No difference was determined according to branch, education, location, and seniority.

Discussion

With the findings of the research, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, it has been seen that procrastination behavior has been high among school principals. Therefore, it can be inferred that school principals tend to procrastinate in beginning, completing, or maintaining their tasks. This result confirmed the results found in previous studies (Odhiambo, 2001; Tirop, 2003) while inconsistent with one of the studies (Yavuz & Özdemir, 2003). However, previous contradicting research has focused on the perceived procrastination by the school managers. As is exemplified by the Cömert and Dönmez (2018) study, perceived procrastination by the school principals and teachers could show different results. In this study, the level of procrastination perceived by school principals was present. Secondly, principals reported little workload due to their position and roles in schools. Therefore, it can be inferred that school principals are not feeling their workload increasing due to their position and roles. This result is in contradiction with some of the previous research in the literature (Klocko & Wells, 2015; Beycioglu, Ugurlu, Abdurrezzak, 2018; Queen & Queen, 2004). However, it should be stated that previous research has examined the workload of school principals in total, whereas this research particularly put a focus on their workload due to their position and roles. Among these researches, only Klocko and Wells (2015) evaluated the principal's workload due to expectations on their role and found that principals responded with a "medium" level effect of their roles on their workload. Thirdly, in this research, principals indicated they are "rarely" task-oriented, "occasionally" cautious, and "rarely" dedicated in terms of their management resourcefulness qualities. These results confirm the previous researches on the management resourcefulness of the principals (Yavuz & Özdemir, 2013; Ugurlu, 2013; Cömert & Dönmez, 2018).

In terms of the relationship between these variables, it has been observed that as principals' workload and management resourcefulness increase, their procrastination levels diminish. Moreover, as the workload perceived by the school principals increases, the management resourcefulness of school principals also rises. Therefore, it can be concluded that as principals have higher management traits, they perceive their workload as higher, which enables them to procrastinate less. This conclusion is in contradiction with the research

conducted by Cömert and Dönmez (2018), as they observed a positive relationship between the workload of principals and their procrastination levels, and a negative relationship between the workload of principals and their task-oriented behavior. However, both researchers concluded that as task-oriented behavior increases and management resourcefulness increases, procrastination levels drop slightly.

The relationship between principals' procrastination, workload, and management resourcefulness has been researched by Cömert and Dönmez (2018). They have observed that procrastination levels among elementary and middle school principals to be perceived as "partly" by them, while principals agreed on the statements on their workload on a "mediumlevel." The research concluded by Cömert and Dönmez exhibited a positive relationship between the procrastination of the principals and their workload. Therefore, according to them, results show that as principals perceive a higher workload, they tend to procrastinate more as well. Cömert and Dönmez claim there is no balance between the tasks, powers, and responsibilities of principals, and this causes difficulties in time management for the school administrators. When principals believe they have too much work, they tend to show procrastination behaviors more frequently. In terms of principals' procrastination and management resourcefulness, Cömert and Dönmez observed a "medium" negative relationship. Therefore, as school principals were more task-oriented, they showed fewer procrastination behaviors. Moreover, a slight negative relationship was observed between the workload and task-oriented behavior of school principals. Therefore, as principals are more task-oriented, they perceive their workload as lower.

Yavuz and Özdemir (2013) researched the procrastination levels of elementary school principals. In this research, they could not find any significant differences among principals in terms of their gender, branch, or age in terms of procrastination behavior. However, this research showed results in which participant principals perceived their level of procrastination as seldom. Cömert and Dönmez (2019) found similar results in their research on school principals' perceived procrastination. All participant principals started the work related to students, staff, and education were not delayed in their respective schools. Principals pointed out the communication with higher authorities as to the possible reason for delays in performing their duties. However, when the same questions were asked to the teachers, they did not agree with the responses given by the school administrators. Most of the teachers in the research stated certain tasks in their school had been postponed due to the principals. In the research, it has been observed that in the same schools, administrators did not report delays in performance in their duties, except unforeseeable events, whereas teachers reported regular delays from their principals. Cömert and Dönmez's research exhibited the difference between school principals and teachers on perceived procrastination in schools.

The last implication that can be made about the relationship between school principals' procrastination, concerns the workload associated with their position and roles and management resourcefulness according to gender, branch, education level, location, and length of service. In the literature, no difference has been found according to the branch, education level, location, and length of service. In terms of gender, conflicting results have been acquired as some researchers found no difference in terms of gender in procrastination (Yavuz & Özdemir, 2013), while some found women to procrastinate less than men (Dönmez & Cömert). Moreover, on

being task-oriented, this research has observed that school principals who are men are more task-oriented than women. This conclusion has been confirmed by the studies in the literature (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Aykan, 2004); however, the reasoning for women being less task-oriented has been challenged by some scholars (Durmuş, 2001). It should be stated that as the number of women school principals who were available to conclude the research was significantly lower than the male counterparts, 8.7%, and 91.3% respectively, future research on the different results according to gender in terms of school principals should be researched further.

Conclusion

As a behavior, procrastination has long been interrogated. However, it is not until recently that the issue of procrastination has been more firmly conceptualized. These conceptualizations have allowed researchers to interrogate procrastination as a behavior found in many institutions, including education. Previous research found that an increase in workload and management styles that emphasize resourcefulness factor into procrastination behavior. This study accounted for the interaction between these two factors and found that resourceful management styles prevented principals' from feeling overwhelmed by their workload and meant that they were less likely to procrastinate.

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