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THE IMPACT OF MANAGERIAL SKILLS ON LIFE SATISFACTION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN TURKISH AND AZERBAIJANI EDUCATION SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT. The primary objective of this study is to ascertain the impact that managerial skills displayed by educational administrators working in public education institutions have on the life satisfaction of teachers from Azerbaijan and Turkey. Furthermore, a comparative analysis is conducted to identify the differences in the relationship in the two countries. Research findings indicate a significant and positive relationship between the management skills of educational administrators and the life satisfaction of teachers, however, the positive correlation was found to be stronger for participants from Azerbaijan than for Turkish respondents. On average, the management skills and competencies of the participants in Turkey were recorded at a high level, while the life satisfaction remained at a medium level. On the other hand, management skills in Azerbaijan was at a below the average. Therefore, significant differences have been found between the two countries in the dimensions of life satisfaction, management skills, ability to take responsibility, technical skills, and qualifications skills. In particular, the findings suggest that, among the managerial skills exhibited by educational administrators in Azerbaijan, "other skills" and "technical skills" positively predicted teacher's life satisfaction. In contrast, the skill of "taking responsibility" emerged as a significant predictor of teachers' life satisfaction in Turkey.

JEL Classification: I20, B16, C83, H75

Keywords: management skills, life satisfaction, education manager

Introduction

According to Robbins, Decenzo and Coulter (2013), management is the process of performing certain tasks effectively and efficiently through others. Thus, a manager's job is to combine human and technical resources in the best possible way to achieve organizational goals (Boone and Kurtz, 2013).

Accurate scientific data is imperative for the effective management of educational processes and the successful functioning of an education system (Örücü & Şimşek, 2011). The

role of educational administrators is pivotal in the effective allocation of resources and personnel in the provision of educational services. The administration of educational institutions is responsible for the efficient and economical use of human resources, capital, time, materials, facilities, and premises that ensure the achievement of the tasks set by the educational system (Evers, 2003; Maxcy, 2001).

Optimal management of education plays a critical role in the development of countries, both in terms of technological capability and economic strength (Macneil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). The field of school management, which constitutes a specialised area of educational administration and facilitates interaction between schools and society, has also changed and developed over time. Schools, which emerged with the institutionalization of educational activities, have assumed the execution of important social functions, particularly in the context of mass education. Effective management of educational organizations, therefore, is contingent upon educational administrators possessing a range of technical, communicative, and managerial skills and competencies.

The education administrator is the most important symbol and owner of the legal authority and power of the educational organization. The effectiveness of the educational administrator is directly related to the management structure of the school and the network of relationships in the school. Educational administrators need to know about the technical aspects of management processes as well as the legal processes, the content of the curriculum, curriculum evaluation and development to manage human resources effectively (Şişman & Turan, 2004).

Nowadays, educational administrators are expected to be equipped with higher-level skills such as leadership, human relations and understanding group dynamics. In educational organizations, some basic conditions must be fulfilled to establish healthy relationships between administrators and teachers and to ensure the life satisfaction of employees. In this context, it is possible to define management effectiveness as a function of influence designed to motivate employees in a way that maximizes their satisfaction (Conlow, 1999).

Life satisfaction is important for employees to be happy while doing their jobs and for their job continuity. It is assumed that educational administrators with high management skills will improve educational conditions by making a direct positive contribution to teachers' life satisfaction. In this respect, the main problem of this research is the relationship between the management skills of educational administrators and teachers' life satisfaction. The study aims to compare the impact of the managerial skills of educational administrators on teachers' life satisfaction in two different countries. This study aims to understand the impact of the managerial skills of educational administrators in Azerbaijan and Turkey on teachers' life satisfaction. In this study, differences between the results obtained from both countries were also identified.

In the literature, there are studies on the relationship between management skills and different variables (Ünal, Karlıdağ, Yoloğlu, 2001; Uygun, 2006; Balcı, 1993; Sarıtaş, 1991; Tanrıöğen, 1988; Fauska and Ogawa 1985; Yarba 2003; Gezer, 2015; Hoque, Raya 2023; Gross and Herriot 1965; Cranston et al., 2003). On the other hand, there are also studies in the literature that consider the relationship between teachers' classroom management skills and life satisfaction (Akin, Koçak, 2007; Özdemir, 2021). However, there is no comparative study on the impact of the managerial skills of educational administrators on the life satisfaction of educational employees in different countries.

Therefore, this study is a pioneer in the literature in terms of addressing the effects of the management skills of educational administrators on the life satisfaction of educational employees at a comparative level with participants from two different countries. On the other hand, the biggest difference of this study is a comparative study that takes into account

participants in two different countries. For this reason, it is thought that this study can make important contributions to the literature in terms of determining the effects of the management skills of educational administrators on the life satisfaction of educational employees as well as providing the opportunity to compare with different country dynamics. It is predicted that the results of this study can provide important information to organizations that want to improve the management skills of educational administrators.

The reason for carrying out the study in Turkey and Azerbaijan is that the social structure, cultural dynamics, institutional structure and educational organization of these countries are very similar.

The study is exploratory and descriptive research. In this study, the data obtained through the convenience sampling technique were analyzed with the causal-comparative model, one of the quantitative research methods, and the results obtained were compared.

1. Conceptual and theoretical background

According to the literature, educational administrators should have some administrative skills to manage schools effectively, which have a significant relationship with administrative effectiveness, and these administrative skills have been the subject of various studies.

On the other hand, the main mission of educational organisations is to train the qualified manpower that society will need in the future. Therefore, meeting the expectations of teachers who will achieve these goals effectively achieves the determined goals of educational organisations. The necessity of an academic administrator with high management skills, as well as the creation of a safe and peaceful school climate, is effective in the life satisfaction of educational staff.

Managerial effectiveness is defined as the result of a complex and intertwined set of relationships (Cammock, Niakant, & Dakin, 1995). A manager's ability to anticipate problems (future orientation) is a result of the characteristics and behaviours exhibited in staff relations and consultation measures. In this framework, managerial effectiveness is associated with outputs rather than inputs (Farahbakhsh, 2007).

Lunenburg (2010) suggests that effective educational administrators' managerial roles and skills can be categorized into two main groups. The first group involves management tasks such as creating and implementing policies, rules, procedures, and authority relations associated with the administrator's role. The second group is the dimension of 'establishing cultural connections', which emphasizes the need to establish behavioral norms to build the cultural foundations of the educational institution. Bolman and Deal (2013) also categorized administrator development and competencies into four dimensions: structural, human resources, symbolic-cultural, and political.

Research conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) emphasized the importance of managerial skills such as problem analysis, decision making, organizational skills, decisiveness, leadership, sensitivity, stress management, oral communication, written communication, communication management, and motivation (Sybout & Wendel, 1994). According to Robbins (1994), an educational administrator can be effective when he/she can communicate with the employees, is supportive of the team members he/she works with, shows respect, is fair and consistent, and gains the respect and appreciation of the employees with his/her technical and professional skills.

Reddin (1971) defined managerial effectiveness as the primary goal of management. He argued that managerial effectiveness should be determined based on outcomes rather than inputs. In other words, a manager's performance should be assessed not by their actions, but by what they achieve. According to Reddin's leadership theory, if we consider teachers' life

satisfaction as an outcome, managerial effectiveness is expected to have a direct impact on teachers' life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction is considered an issue that should be emphasised especially to ensure the productivity of employees, their happiness at work and their continuity in their jobs. In recent years, managers have realised that they should take into account the life satisfaction of their employees and support the processes related to the life satisfaction of employees. In 1961, Neugarten introduced the concept of life satisfaction, which is primarily based on emotional well-being. It refers to the state in which a person evaluates their life as ideal, reflecting their happiness and overall quality of life (Piccolo, Judge, Takahashi, Watanabe, & Locke, 2005: 966). Life satisfaction, a positive evaluation of one's own life, diminishes in the presence of negative feelings (Zhao, Qu, & Ghiselli, 2011: 48). It involves comparing one's personal criteria and perception of life conditions to evaluate one's own life (Pavot & Diener, 1993; Selçukoğlu, 2001; Deniz, 2006).

Life satisfaction includes subjective judgements about personal satisfaction with one's life, current work, marriage, education and other factors in one's life. Feeling good about oneself is an important determinant of health. It is accepted that many factors including health, income levels, educational levels, status, personality and social relations influence a person's life satisfaction (Ngoo, Tan, & Tey, 2021: 917 - 919; Mishchuk et al., 2023; Morrone, Piscitelli, & D'Ambrosio, 2019: 480 - 481; Amati, Meggiolaro, Rivellini, & Zaccarin, 2018: 3-5).

It is not possible to draw a clear boundary around life satisfaction. Research on life satisfaction shows that life satisfaction depends on many factors that differ from individual to individual and even from society to society. Life satisfaction, which is psychologically based on people's views of life, their expectations of life, and their level of satisfaction, has implications for the organisational life of employees. In the literature, life satisfaction has been studied in terms of job satisfaction, loneliness, job burnout, self-efficacy, irrational beliefs, identity functions, emotional intelligence, parental attitudes, individual sense of integrity, family sense of integrity and self-esteem, receiving psychological help, subjective well-being (Ay & Avşaroğlu, 2010; Çeçen, 2008; Çivitçi, 2009; Demir, 2011).

Life satisfaction, which can affect all areas of daily life and is a subjective assessment, is also important for the teaching profession. This is because teaching is a profession related to and interacts with a large human community (Şişman, 2002). In addition, the aspect that distinguishes the teaching profession from other professions is that it is affected by management skills and has the power to influence the people around it in the communication process.

Etzioni (1994) assesses managerial resourcefulness in terms of its alignment with organisational goal attainment. Educational institutions have persisted in their endeavours to remain effective and achieve their objectives since their inception, operating within the confines of a legal framework. Damnoen, Phumphongkhochasorn, Pornpitchanarong and Nanposri (2022) defined management skills as the critical characteristics that a manager should have in achieving the goals of an organisation. Quast and Hazucha (1992: 203) categorised management skills in five dimensions. These are;

1. Qualification Skills: Personal motivation, quality work, student success, information,
2. Other Skills: Verbal communications, problem analysis and decision making.
3. Technical Skills: Written communications, financial and quantitative skills, business knowledge and technical knowledge,
4. Skills related to Taking Responsibility: Planning, organising, personal organisation and time management, giving information, leadership style and influencing people, delegation and control,
5. Initiative Taking Skills: Listening, human relations, conflict management and motivating employees.

In this study, the managerial competencies of managers were assessed following the tenets of transformational leadership theory. A transformational leader is defined as an individual capable of articulating a vision, persuading their employees to adopt this vision, and inspiring them to believe that transformation (or change) is necessary. It is reasonable to posit that a transformational leader will exhibit a number of superior characteristics and skills to influence employees to move towards specific goals or objectives. As posited by Burns (1978), transformational leaders emphasise that they facilitate their followers' progress at a higher level of moral motivation. Transformational leaders exemplify ethical conduct, inspiring trust, respect and pride in those they lead. Transformational leaders who demonstrate care for the development of their employees and empower them by addressing their needs effectively transform individual goals and objectives into those of the group and the entire organisation. This approach simultaneously enhances employee life satisfaction and unit performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006: 3; Barling, Slater, & Kelloway, 2000: 157; Kuráth et al., 2023).

Recent studies indicate a positive correlation between transformational leadership and employees' life satisfaction (Amin et al., 2013; Chully & Sandhya, 2014; Kristinsson et al., 2022; Oliinyk et al., 2024). The findings of these studies indicate that an individual's happiness and satisfaction in their work life not only influence their work-related experiences but also extend to their daily life. As Izgar (2003) notes, individuals do not differentiate between their attitudes towards their professional roles and their broader outlook on life.

Fauska and Ogawa (1985) established a correlation between the degree of attention and perceived importance afforded by educational administrators to teachers in educational organisations and their capacity to perform effectively and successfully within the school environment. In their meta-analysis study, Judge and Piccolo (2004:760) highlight the significant impact of transformational leadership on enhancing organisational and employee performance, as well as on fostering greater life satisfaction. It can, therefore, be stated that managers who exhibit a transformational leadership approach in terms of their management skills have a positive impact on the life satisfaction of their employees. In his study, 'Perceptions and Expectations of Primary School Teachers about the Management Skills of the School Administrators' (2003), Yarba found that teachers' perceptions and expectations about the general management, conceptual, technical and human skills of educational administrators differed significantly according to the length of service of the teachers in the schools where they worked and the appointment type of the school administrators.

In the study conducted by Neal Gross and Robert Herriot (1965), it was demonstrated that the implementation of managerial skills in educational organisations resulted in enhanced productivity and improved student morale and performance. In a study conducted by Tanrıöğen (1988), a positive and linear relationship was identified between the conceptual, technical and human relations skills of educational administrators and teachers' subjective well-being. The provision of support for teachers' professional development and the demonstration of positive leadership behaviours by educational administrators are identified as factors influencing teachers' morale.

A teacher who works with a transformational leader will be held in high esteem (Nikezic, Puric, & Puric, 2012), their creativity will be encouraged, and their capacity to implement new ideas will enhance their job satisfaction. An educational administrator with high managerial skills is responsible for the training of teachers, the motivation of teaching staff and the creation of an environment of trust. This will consequently lead to an increase in job satisfaction, motivation and life satisfaction levels.

Özdemir (2021) found in his study that the managerial skills of educational administrators have a positive impact on teachers' life satisfaction. Quast and Hazucha (1992 :

203) stated that the qualification skills within management skills consist of personal motivation, qualified work, student success, and information.

The positive attitudes and behaviours exhibited by school administrators have been demonstrated to have a beneficial impact on the motivation of teaching staff. This approach is effective in achieving the school's purpose and, most importantly, in enhancing student achievement (Thompson, 1996: 3; Latham, 1998). Furthermore, school administrators are tasked with providing teachers with the motivation they require to perform their profession with great effort and enthusiasm. It is as crucial for school principals to be personally motivated as it is for teachers to be motivated in their professional roles. In light of the expectations associated with the responsibilities of school administrators, the challenges they encounter, and the sources of stress, it can be posited that motivation sources are crucial for optimal professional performance. Individuals who are highly motivated tend to experience high levels of job satisfaction (Saracel et al., 2016).

In considering the various factors that contribute to student learning in an educational setting, research findings suggest that school administrators are a significant influence, ranking second only to classroom education (Cullen & Mazzeo, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2004). In light of the pivotal role of school administrators in student success, an investigation into the motivational factors that drive them could prove invaluable in enhancing educational outcomes.

The level of intrinsic empowerment, or motivation, is a significant factor influencing teachers' job satisfaction (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2005). It is widely acknowledged that teachers' job satisfaction plays a pivotal role in shaping their level of commitment. It is recommended that school administrators endeavour to enhance teachers' job satisfaction, thereby fostering increased commitment to the school (Reyes & Shin, 1995). This indicates that an environment conducive to job satisfaction is also one that motivates individuals (Lawler, 1994).

Helvacı and Erdoğan (2011) concluded that the school principal's good relations with students and teachers, that is, his/her ability to demonstrate humanistic skills, increases the performance of teachers and students and thus increases the effectiveness of schools. In Gyimah's (2020) study, it was concluded that job satisfaction, reward systems, professional training and development seminars affect the motivation of administrators. Therefore, it can be thought that the qualification skills of administrators will be effective in teachers' life satisfaction. Administrators who exhibit the role of providing information at a high level contribute to the empowerment of teachers.

Therefore, the first hypothesis of our research can be established as follows.

H1: The qualitative skills dimension of management skills positively and significantly affects life satisfaction.

In their study, Dee et al. (2006) found that school principals considered communication to be an important factor in managing difficult situations and that they evaluated their ability to manage such situations in part on the basis of their communication skills. Effective verbal communication has a beneficial impact on the organisational climate (Griffin, 1996). In organisations where positive interactions are prevalent, school efficiency is optimised, as joint decision-making, motivation and conviction are more evident. Effective communication between school stakeholders will have a positive impact on the school environment, which in turn will enhance the school's reputation and acceptance as a living space. Msila (2012) highlighted the necessity for school principals to possess certain skills, including the ability to resolve conflicts between employees and to act as mediators in times of conflict.

In order for the school climate to be positive, school principals must be able to establish positive relationships with their employees, manage the relations between them, motivate them, facilitate their work and ensure that they work in a comfortable environment.

In terms of the analysis of the problem, the function may be defined as providing information via managerial communication in the decision-making process; as a motivating factor for members of the organisation; as a means of expressing feelings and emotions; and as a source of life satisfaction (George & Jones, 1999: 453).

The information obtained by managers in organisations and the relationships established with employees is instrumental in facilitating effective decision-making processes. The decision-making role entails the manager selecting the option that is most beneficial to the organisation. The decision-making role undertaken by managers is to determine the future direction of the organisation, the type of employees to be recruited, the resources required, the issues facing the organisation and the solutions to these issues. The decision-making role encompasses a number of key responsibilities, including the capacity to act as an entrepreneur, problem solver, resource allocator and negotiator.

In this context, hypothesis H2 can be established as follows.

H2: Other skills dimension of management skills (verbal communications, problem analysis and decision making) positively and significantly affect life satisfaction.

The term "technical skill" can be defined as the ability to possess specific knowledge, experience, or a condition conducive to the utilization of tools and techniques in order to accomplish a task. In other words, technical skills are related to a comprehensive understanding of the work and the utilisation of appropriate methods, tools, equipment and skills for the completion of the task at hand. The technical skills of school administrators encompass a range of competencies, including methods, legislation, the work to be done, and procedures to be applied. Additionally, they require expertise in rules and regulations. Conversely, it encompasses competencies within a specific domain, analytical aptitude, and the capacity to utilise pertinent tools and techniques. Additionally, managerial influence on organisational structure, policies and programme processes is regarded as a form of technical competence (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1988).

Kochamba (1996:29) defines technical skills as 'competence in procedures, methods and training techniques (finance, accounting, maintenance, repair, programming and purchasing)'; Meadows (2007: 22), 'the abilities and competencies necessary for the completion of the tasks required, enabling the leader to effectively move the organisation towards the realisation of the organisation's goals and responsibilities'; Sheriff (1968), 'the ability to work using specific methods, processes and techniques involving a specific area of knowledge, discipline; human skills; the ability to work harmoniously with individuals within the organisation; and that leaders with technical skills are able to focus on all functions of the organisation, not only on a specific function area, and therefore are able to see the organisation as a whole'.

The manager's influence on organisational structure, budget, policies and plans is also considered within the scope of technical skills (Açıkgöz, 1994; Northouse, 2018; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988). Quast and Hazucha (1992: 203) identified technical skills as written communications, financial and quantitative skills, job-related knowledge and technical knowledge.

Similar to these results, Johnson (2017) found that principals reflecting democratic leadership style positively affected teachers' job satisfaction. In contrast to these results, Marino (2024) found that teachers had negative perceptions of feeling that they were not valued and perceived a lack of support from school principals.

In this context, another hypothesis of the research was formed as follows.

H3: The technical skills dimension of management skills positively and significantly affects life satisfaction.

Quast and Hazucha (1992) defined the skills related to taking responsibility within managerial skills as planning, organising, personally organising and time management, giving information, leadership style and influencing people, choosing representatives and controlling behaviours.

In accordance with the findings of Goleman (2010), it can be posited that the personal styles of leaders exhibit considerable diversity. This is due to the necessity of employing disparate leadership styles in accordance with the specific circumstances at hand. In studies conducted on effective schools, it has been observed that the leadership qualities and behaviours exhibited by the school principal play an important role in determining the effectiveness of the school (Edmonds, 1979). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the school principal's demonstration of effective leadership behaviours, which extends beyond the formal role, contributes to the positive employee behaviours of the school staff (Chen, Beck, & Amos, 2005; Evans, 1998; Riaz & Haider, 2010).

The leadership behaviours of principals exert a considerable influence on the dimensions of teacher leadership, including the communication of the vision of learning, the provision of support for teachers' professional development, the improvement of the curriculum and instruction, and the enhancement of the teaching environment (Pan & Chen, 2021). A substantial corpus of literature exists which discusses the relationship between principals' leadership styles and other variables, including school performance, commitment, burnout, and organisational culture (Hallinger, Hosseingholizadeh, Hashemi, & Kosari, 2018; Imhangbe, Okecha, & Obozuwa, 2019).

In order to plan the future of the educational establishment, determine its direction and ensure the smooth running of school activities, those in administrative roles assume certain responsibilities within the organisation. In accordance with their designated authority, they assume roles pertaining to interpersonal interactions, the dissemination of information, and the making of decisions, with the objective of achieving the desired outcomes for the educational institution. In order for school administrators to perform their roles effectively, it is essential that they possess the capacity to influence their employees. In order to do so, administrators must understand the various forms of influence that can be employed. Such influence is derived from two sources: official authority and personality traits.

The changing environmental conditions and social structure have not only transformed the school and the educational environment but have also increased the roles and responsibilities of the school principal. The introduction of more transparent and democratic management and decision-making processes, reform efforts in education, a reduction in the resources allocated to schools due to limited budgets, an increase in workloads, and the realisation of expectations from parents and society regarding student achievement have collectively led to an expansion of the roles and responsibilities of school principals (Friedman, 1995; 2002; McPeake, 2006; Whitaker, 1996). The aforementioned tasks, which are increasing in number and interrelated, present school principals with significant challenges in terms of time management. In addition to planning the time in the school according to priorities and utilising it in an optimal manner, school principals are expected to possess a personalised time plan and proficiency in time management. One of the most crucial responsibilities of a school administrator is to facilitate coordination among various activities.

The role of a manager is that of a communicator, situated at the centre of a network of individuals, and thus responsible for both the management of knowledge and its primary source. Managers attempt to identify solutions to the issues within the organisation by utilising the information at their disposal. It is crucial for managers to develop their knowledge base, disseminate knowledge effectively, and demonstrate the ability to direct and manage this knowledge in a strategic manner.

When this position of the school principal is considered holistically with his/her tasks such as setting school goals, distribution of tasks within the school and ensuring the participation of school stakeholders in decision-making processes, it is unthinkable that he/she can fully fulfil his/her leadership tasks without adequate communication (Arlestig, 2007; Gaol, 2021). These patterns are typical also for higher education as well (Lacmanović & Škare, 2024; Moreno-Carmona et al., 2022).

Therefore, it is expected that the principal's ability to take responsibility will not only determine teachers' professional effectiveness, but also their life satisfaction, which is influenced by professional effectiveness. In other words, the dimensions of the ability to take responsibility, which is a leadership skill, are likely to have an impact on teachers' life satisfaction. From this point of view, another hypothesis of the research was formed as follows.

H4: The dimension of taking responsibility among management skills positively and significantly affects life satisfaction.

According to Taris and Meije -Wielenga (2010), the initiative taking skill is used in management processes in the sense of starting spontaneously, being proactive and being persistent in order to achieve goals. Initiative taking skills contribute to the development of employees' self-confidence, entrepreneurship and business success (Fay & Frese, 2001).

Quast and Hazucha (1992) pointed to school administrators' skills such as listening, human relations, conflict management and staff motivation as part of the initiative-taking skills included in managerial skills.

School administrators are expected to make their staff feel important, motivate them, give them feedback and guide them towards the achievement of organisational goals in order to be effective in the school. Listening is one of the most important elements of communication. Without listening, it is not possible for the manager to understand the other person. If school administrators listen to teachers, take their opinions and ensure that they are involved in the decisions that are made when carrying out management activities, this will both ensure early detection and prevention of problems and increase success.

In order to raise the level of communication with administrators and teachers to a higher level, they are expected to know themselves well, accept environmental differences, listen carefully to the person or group with whom they are in contact, understand and receive feedback. A competent manager is one who knows his or her people and can design the details to make them happy (Ludlow, 1992).

In studies conducted in the literature (Çetin, Sertbaş, 2024), it was stated that managers' understanding and listening skills should be improved. Administrators should be able to listen to their teachers in all situations, understand them and show that they value teachers' ideas. A teacher who sees that he/she is listened to and understood by his/her administrator can be more effective and successful in his/her job.

Communication is one of the basic processes that play a role in the realization of all organizational activities. Organizational employees are constantly a part of the communication process. Research shows that managers in the organization spend most of their time on communication (Gibson, Ivancevich, & Donnelly, 2000).

Interpersonal communication, motivating employees and understanding their feelings and attitudes, providing a comfortable working environment, honesty and problem solving include competencies such as human relations. Human skills enable the manager to work more effectively as an active member of the group and to strengthen cooperation in the group he manages (Hoy and Miskel, 2012; Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1988).

Human skills provide the manager with the ability to work effectively as a member of the group and thus establish cooperation within the group (Bursalıoğlu, 1991). Therefore, human competencies gain special importance in educational organizations where informal

relationships are experienced intensively. The most important source of influence in motivating educational employees with whom educational managers are in constant communication is the behaviors related to human competence they exhibit.

Conflict, like communication, is one of the processes that exist in organizations, affects the effectiveness of the organization, and occupies managers. Regardless of the nature of the conflict, if the organization's energy is to be directed towards goals, managers must be able to recognize conflict and manage it effectively.

Conflict is a communication process. Communication is both a source of conflict and plays an active role in conflict management. The effectiveness of communication, which is felt at every stage of the conflict process, is largely in the hands of the conflicting parties and the parties must have certain skills for functional communication (Ellis and Maoz, 2003). In fact, Gross and Guerrero (2000) state that individuals who can effectively manage conflict in organizations are adequate communicators and talented leaders.

Although there are no studies in the literature focusing on the initiative-taking behavior of school administrators, which is among the management skills, based on related studies, the behaviors of listening, human relations, conflict management and motivating employees, which are among the initiative-taking skills, have a significant impact on life satisfaction.

Therefore, the other hypothesis of our research is formed as follows.

H5: The initiative dimension of management skills affects life satisfaction positively and significantly.

Hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 will be evaluated separately depending on the answers given by the participants from Azerbaijan and Turkey, as the research included participants from two different countries.

2. Methodological approach

2.1. The research model

Based on the literature review, the research model created by the problem of the research is given below. This research model analyzes the correlation between the managerial skills of educational administrators in Turkey and Azerbaijan and the life satisfaction of educational employees. The hypotheses for the research were based on the theoretical foundations of the variables being studied.



Figure 1. Research Model

Source: own compilation

2.2. Data collection technique and scales

In this study, data were collected using the questionnaire method. The questionnaire consists of 4 sections and the first section includes questions about the demographic characteristics of the participants. The "Management Skills Scale" developed by Quast and Hazucha (1992) was used in the study. The scale grouped management skills into five sub-dimensions and 34 items. "Satisfaction with Life Scale" was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985:72) and consists of 5 items and one dimension.

2.3. Study population, sample and limitations

The population of the research is teachers working in public schools in Turkey and Azerbaijan. The main reason for choosing Turkey and Azerbaijan for the universe of the research is that the two countries are close to each other in terms of culture, sociological dynamics, politics, trade, international relations and many other aspects. Since Turkey has a great influence on Azerbaijan in areas such as education, technology and health, a comparative study covering these two countries in the field of education was conducted.

In both countries, the convenience sampling method was used and survey forms were sent to 250 teachers in Azerbaijan and 250 teachers in Turkey via Google Forms via e-mail between 01.02.2023 and 31.05.2023. From the sample group, 153 teachers in Azerbaijan and 244 teachers in Turkey filled out the survey forms. The response rate of the survey forms in Azerbaijan was 61.4% and 97.6% in Turkey. Analyses were made with the answers obtained.

According to commonly used guidelines for determining sample size in quantitative research, it is recommended to have 5-10 times the number of participants (Hair et al., 2009, Cattell, 1978, Comrey & Lee, 1992, and Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In this study, since the scales consist of a total of 39 items, the number of participants obtained from both countries is considered to be sufficient.

The biggest limitation of the research is the number of teachers and schools in Turkey and Azerbaijan. Therefore, the research is limited to the sample that can be reached. Another limitation of the research is that the sample group was formed from teachers working in public schools, and it is assumed that teachers may have felt pressure to answer the questions in the questionnaire form due to their professional concerns and reservations.

2.4. Analysis of validity and reliability

The construct validity of the scales used in the study was tested by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). AMOS 26.0 programme was used in factor analysis. It was determined that the fit values produced by the measurement models created for factor analysis were within the desired limits.

Table 1. Good fit values of scales

Scales/Dimensions	Country	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	GFI	AGFI	NFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Management Skills Scale	Turkey	2.528	.908	.900	.910	.912	.857	.079	.051
	Azerbaijan	1.934	.904	.917	.869	.888	.969	.078	.067
Life Satisfaction Scale	Turkey	2.229	.990	.981	.983	.948	.983	.071	.020
	Azerbaijan	1.606	.990	.980	.980	.939	.975	.063	.028
Good Fit Values		≤ 3	0,95	.95	0,90	.90	.95	$\leq 0,05$	$\leq 0,05$
Acceptable Fit Values *		$\leq 4-5$	0,90	.90	,89-0,85	.85	.90	0,06-0,08	$\leq 0,10$

*Joreskog ve Sörbom, (1993); Kline, (1998); Anderson ve Gerbing, (1998). Meydan ve Şeşen (2011)

Source: own calculation

When the confirmatory factor analysis results of the scales are analysed, it is seen that the data obtained from the participants from both countries fit the scales well. Since the fit values of the measurement models in Table 1 are within the desired limits, it is possible to say that the single-factor structures of all variables are confirmed. The factor loadings of the scales and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients related to their reliability calculated with the SPSS programme are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Factor Loadings and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of the Scales

Factor	Statement	Turkey			Azerbaijan	
		Phrase Code	Factor Load	Cronbach Alfa	Factor Load	Cronbach Alfa
Taking Initiative	School Manager; Listens carefully to the questions and comments of the teachers	1	,82		,68	
	Establishes good relations with other school principals	2	,89	,923	,55	,839
	Co-operates with subordinates and superiors	3	,74		,51	
	Listens respectfully to teachers' feelings and thoughts	4	,86		,74	
	Manages conflicts between teachers in a way that fosters collaboration instead of rivalry.	5	,50		,54	
	Guides teachers to group work	6	,82		,62	
	Rewards the success of teachers in group work	7	,71		,72	
	He gives an understandable answer to those who ask him questions	8	,87		,64	
Taking Responsibility	Develop strategies to achieve goals.	9	,89	,951	,69	
	Carries out their work in a planned manner	10	,89		,76	
	Prepares annual work plan	11	,89		,60	,885
	Uses time effectively	12	,88		,73	
	Carries out official correspondence procedures effectively	13	,70		,66	
	Informs teachers in a timely manner about changes in decisions taken	14	,76		,60	
	Takes responsibility and leads the work.	15	,89		,66	
	Affects the behaviour of individuals and groups	16	,73		,55	
	Affects the behaviour of individuals and groups	17	,78		,64	
	Assigns duties to teachers	18	,46		,46	
	Gives responsibility to teachers	19	,61		,45	
	Provides teachers with resources to facilitate their work.	20	,81		,64	
	Follows the work of teachers	21	,88		,48	

RECENT ISSUES IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Technical Skills	Uses appropriate language and expression in informal communication with teachers	22	,67		,96	
	Uses appropriate style, grammar and expression in official communication with teachers.	23	,74	,893	,60	,682
	Apply the principles of finance to management problems	24	,73		,51	
	Demonstrates the knowledge and skills required to do a job	25	,88		,52	
	Uses technical competences effectively in problem solving	26	,92		,56	
Other Skills	Speaks effectively one-to-one and in groups	27	,82		,48	
	Finds problems	28	,79		,64	
	Makes appropriate decisions in solving problems	29	,87	,913	,69	,741
	Operates the school efficiently	30	,92		,75	
Qualification Skills	Endeavours to ensure that the work done is of high quality	31	,91		,70	
	Evaluates the success of students with teachers	32	,81	,924	,75	,815
	Provides a learning climate based on trust in the school	33	,89		,75	
	The school informs teachers and students about home student achievements	34	,85		,68	
Life Satisfaction	I have a life close to my ideals	1	,83		,61	
	My living conditions are excellent	2	,77		,75	
	I am satisfied with my life	3	,86	,884	,85	,848
	So far I have got the important things I want from life	4	,77		,73	
	If I were born again, I would change almost nothing in my life	5	,66		,72	

Source: own calculation

3. Findings

3.1. Demographic features

After conducting confirmatory factor analysis on data gathered from participants in both countries, it was discovered that the factor loading value of the scale items exceeded .45, as reported by Balçı (1995: 142-143). As a result, no items were removed during subsequent analyses.

Table 3. Demographic Data of the Participants

Demographic Features	Turkey			Azerbaijan			
	Frequency	Percent		Demographic Features	Frequency	Percent	
Gender	Kadın	160	65.6	Gender	Kadın	108	70.6
	Erkek	84	34.4		Erkek	45	29.4
	Toplam	244	100		Toplam	153	100
Marital Status	Evli	205	84.0	Marital Status	Evli	71	46.4
	Bekâr	37	15.2		Bekâr	82	53.6
Age	25-30	8	3.3	Age	25-30	94	61.4
	31-35	23	9.4		31-35	20	13.1
	36-40	56	23.0		36-40	10	6.5
	41-45	60	24.6		41-45	8	5.2
	46-50	42	17.2		46-50	8	5.2
	51-55	40	16.4		51-55	4	2.6
	56 +	15	6.1		56 +	9	5.9
Occupational Seniority	1-5	9	3.7	Occupational Seniority	1-5	91	59.5
	6-10	25	10.2		6-10	18	11.8

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	11-15	39	16.0		11-15	12	7.8
	16-20	55	22.5		16-20	9	5.9
	21-25	43	17.6		21-25	8	5.2
	26-30	40	16.4		26-30	6	3.9
	31+	33	13.5		31+	9	5.9
Education	Bachelor's degree	185	75.8	Education	Bachelor's degree	96	62.7
	Master's Degree	57	23.4		Master's Degree	50	32.7
	PhD	2	0.8		PhD	7	4.6

Source: own calculation

The majority of the participants in both countries were women (Turkey: 65.6%, Azerbaijan: 70.6%). The gender distribution of the participant group coincides with the findings that women constitute the numerical majority in the teaching profession compared to men in many countries around the world (Erginer, Saklan, 2020).

Among the participant teachers in Azerbaijan, 53.6% were single, 61.4% were in the 25-30 age group, 59.5% were between 1-5 years of professional seniority, and 62.7% were undergraduate graduates. Among the participant teachers in Turkey, 84% were married, 24.6% were in the 41.45 age group, 22.5% were between 16-20 years, and 75.8% were undergraduate graduates. The rate of master's degree among teachers in Azerbaijan is high. Teachers from Turkey are older and more senior than teachers from Azerbaijan.

3.2. Correlation findings

Correlation findings of the variables of the research are given in Table 4. According to the correlation data obtained from the participants from both countries, a positive relationship was found between the variables of the research.

Pearson correlation analysis was performed and the skewness and kurtosis values of all variables in both samples were between -1 and +1.

Table 4. Correlation findings

		Qualification Skills	Other Skills	Technical Skills	Taking Responsibility	Taking Initiative	Life Satisfaction
Qualification Skills	Turkey	----					
	Azerbaijan	----					
Other Skills	Turkey	0.909***	----				
	Azerbaijan	0.742***	----				
Technical Skills	Turkey	0.868***	0.863***	----			
	Azerbaijan	0.598***	0.560***	----			
Taking Responsibility	Turkey	0.885***	0.903***	0.859***	----		
	Azerbaijan	0.736***	0.727***	0.770***	----		
Taking Initiative	Turkey	0.834***	0.814***	0.832***	0.835***	----	
	Azerbaijan	0.685***	0.708***	0.719***	0.787***	----	
Life Satisfaction	Turkey	0.191**	0.210***	0.192**	0.218***	0.173**	---
	Azerbaijan	0.482***	0.486***	0.436***	0.480***	0.479***	----

. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Source: own calculation

According to the answers given by the teachers from Turkey, a significant relationship was found between "management skills qualitative skills dimension and life satisfaction" ($r=0.191$, $p<.001$), "management skills other skills dimension" ($r= 0.210$, $p<.001$), "management skills technical skills dimension" ($r=0.192$, $p<.001$), "management skills taking responsibility dimension" ($r= 0.218$, $p<.001$), "management skills taking initiative dimension" ($r= 0.173$, $p<.001$). (Table 4)

Teachers from Azerbaijan who participated in the study showed a moderate correlation between their management skills scores and their life satisfaction scale scores. According to the answers given by the teachers from Azerbaijan, "between the dimension of qualitative skills of management skills and life satisfaction" ($r=0.482$, $p<.001$), "other skills of management skills" ($r= 0.486$, $p<. 001$), "management skills technical skills dimension" ($r=0.436$, $p<.001$), "management skills taking responsibility dimension" ($r= 0.480$, $p<.001$), "management skills taking initiative dimension" ($r= 0.479$, $p<.001$).

According to the results obtained in Turkey, there is a weak relationship between management skills and life satisfaction. However, the results obtained overlap with the results in the literature, albeit limited (Özdemir, 2021). Teachers participating in the study from Azerbaijan indicated a moderate relationship between management skills and life satisfaction.

According to the correlation findings from both countries, the relationship between management skills and life satisfaction is weaker for participants in Turkey, despite being positive and significant. In other words, it can be stated that there is a positive and significant relationship between management skills and life satisfaction at a higher level than the teachers in Turkey. The difference in this correlational level in the two countries can be considered to be related to social structure and cultural dynamics.

3.3. Regression analyses

In the study, regression analysis was carried out by stepwise regression method to determine the impact of managerial skills of educational administrators in Turkey and Azerbaijan on teachers' life satisfaction.

Table 5. Stepwise Regression Analysis for the Prediction of Life Satisfaction (Turkey)

Independent Variables	β	p	S. H.	Model Statistics	
Taking Responsibility	.218	.000	.073	$R^2 = .047$ Adj. $R^2 = .043$ $F = 12.018$	$p = .000$ Tolerance > 0.4 VIF < 2.5 D.W. = 2.003

* Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction – Method: Stepwise

Source: own calculation

The residuals of the regression model were tested for normality using a Q-Q plot and the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results confirmed that the residuals were normally distributed ($W = .992$; $p = .593$).

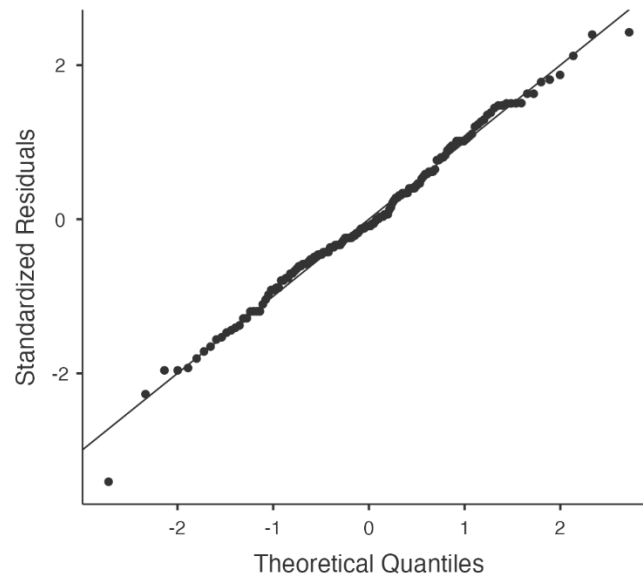


Figure 1. Q-Q Plot of Regression Analysis (Turkey)

Source: own calculation

According to the participants in Turkey, the ability to take responsibility, one of the management skills of educational administrators, has a low-level impact on life satisfaction ($R^2 = .047$). Therefore, hypothesis H4 was supported. Hypotheses H1, H2, H3 and H5 were rejected since there was no significant impact between other dimensions of management skills and life satisfaction for the participants from Turkey.

Table 6. Stepwise Regression Analysis for the Prediction of Life Satisfaction (Azerbaijan)

Independent Variables	β	p	S. H.	Model İstatistiği	
Other Skills	.351	<u>.000</u>	.102	$R^2 = .275$ Adj. $R^2 = .266$	$p = .000$ Tolerance > 0.4
Technical Skills	.240	.005	.115	$F = 28.480$	VIF < 2.5 D.W. = 2.061

* Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction - Method: Stepwise

Source: own calculation

According to the teachers from Azerbaijan, it is seen the "Other Skills ($\beta = .351$ $p < 0.00$)" and "Technical Skills ($\beta = .240$ $p < 0.05$)" dimensions of the management skills of educational administrators have a significant impact on life satisfaction. Therefore, according to the data obtained, hypotheses H2 and H3 are supported and hypotheses H1-H4-H5 are rejected (Table 6). Also the residuals of the regression model were tested for normality using a Q-Q plot and the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results confirmed that the residuals were normally distributed ($W = .991$; $p = .439$).

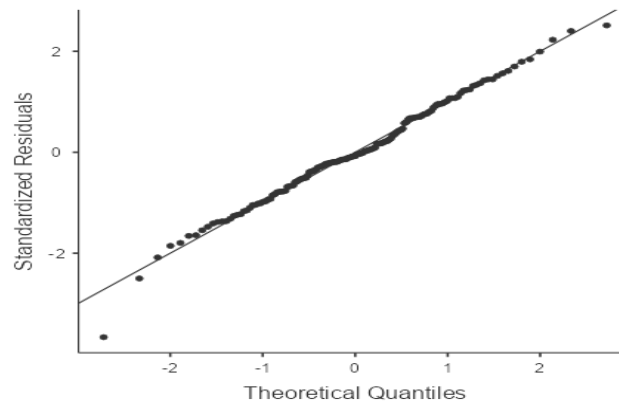


Figure 2. Q-Q Plot of Regression Analysis (Azerbaijan)

Source: own calculation

According to the participants from Turkey and Azerbaijan, T-test was used to determine whether the management skills of educational administrators differ significantly on life satisfaction. In this direction, Independent-samples T-test was used to compare the scores obtained from the teachers of two different countries and to test whether the difference was significant or not.

Table 7. Independent Sample T Test

Variables	Turkey (N=244)		Azerbaijan (N=153)		p	t	f
	Average	S.S.	Average	S.S.			
Life Satisfaction	3.14	.919	2.86	.928	<u>.004</u>	-2.915	.425
Taking Initiative	3.70	.869	3.48	.739	<u>.007</u>	-2.699	3.187
Taking Responsibility	3.84	.788	3.61	.660	<u>.003</u>	-3.024	2.848
Technical Skills	3.81	.841	3.46	.679	<u>.000</u>	-4.360	3.244
Qualification Skills	3.75	.994	3.67	.854	.085	-.816	1.191
Other Skills	3.75	.953	3.59	.765	.415	-1.725	4.549

Degrees of Freedom = 395

Source: own calculation

The findings show that the life satisfaction scores of the teachers from Turkey (3.14) are significantly higher than the scores of the teachers from Azerbaijan (2.86) ($t=-2.915$, $p<0.05$) in the "taking initiative dimension of management skills" (Turkey: 3.70, Azerbaijan 3.48, $t=-2.699$, $p<0.05$), "taking responsibility dimension" (Turkey: 3.84, Azerbaijan 3.61, $t=-3.024$, $p<0.05$), "technical skills dimension" (Turkey: 3.81, Azerbaijan 3.46, $t=-4.360$, $p<0.05$), there is a significant difference. There is no statistically significant difference in the qualification skill dimension of management skills (Turkey: 3.75, Azerbaijan 3.67, $t=-2.699$, $p<0.05$). There is no significant difference in the other skill dimensions (Turkey: 3.75, Azerbaijan 3.59, $t=-2.699$, $p>0.05$).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the managerial skills of educational administrators affect the life satisfaction of teachers in Turkey and Azerbaijan. After analyzing data from both countries, it was discovered that there is a significant positive correlation between the skills of educational administrators and the life satisfaction of teachers.

There are several factors that impact the life satisfaction of teachers, including their economic and professional status, environmental conditions, and expectation levels (Telef, 2011). As a highly respected profession, teaching plays a crucial role in shaping the future generation. Therefore, when teachers have high levels of life satisfaction, it is likely to have a positive impact on future generations by creating a sense of synergy.

According to the results of the "Correlation" analysis conducted within the scope of the research, differences were found between the participants of the two countries. It was determined that there was a significant positive relationship between managerial skills and life satisfaction among the participants of both countries. The level of relationship between managerial skills of educational administrators in Azerbaijan and life satisfaction of teachers is higher than the participants from Turkey. Since the study is a pioneering study in the literature, the results obtained could not be compared.

When analyzing the average participation levels of participants based on the variables measured, mean values ranging from 1.00 to 2.33 were classified as "low level" or "low participation". Mean values between 2.34 and 3.66 were categorized as "medium level" or "medium participation", while mean values between 3.67 and 5.00 were classified as "high level" or "high participation".

When the interpretation of the averages in the research was made according to this categorisation order; it was seen that the average of the participant teachers from Turkey in the dimensions of management skills was at a high level and life satisfaction was at a medium level, while the averages of the teachers from Azerbaijan according to their answers were at a medium level. According to the results obtained, the averages of the participants in Turkey in all dimensions are higher than the participants in Azerbaijan.

According to the results obtained, the participants in both countries were "undecided" about the questions related to life satisfaction, while they stated that they "agreed more" with the questions related to management skills. According to these results, it is observed that teachers in both countries have a positive approach towards the management skills of educational administrators, but they have reservations about life satisfaction. Teaching is a profession that requires life satisfaction. The fact that teachers are pessimistic about this issue should be considered as an issue that policymakers should emphasise

The data collected from participants in two countries was analyzed using a "T test." Independent T-test analyses showed significant differences in dimensions such as "Satisfaction with Life," "Management Skills," "Responsibility Taking Skills," "Technical Skills," and "Qualification Skills." The results suggest that the formal aspect of educational administration elicits different responses in educational organizations of the two countries..

Management is a human phenomenon. For this reason, social structure and culture have important effects on management processes. In this context, it is possible to talk about the existence of a functional relationship between culture and management. It is normal and probable that the management skills of educational administrators are affected by social dynamics and culture.

Among managerial skills, the quality skill dimension refers to personal motivation, quality work, student success and information skills, while the other skill dimension refers to verbal communication, problem analysis and decision making. If it is taken into consideration,

these skills can be expressed as behaviours shaped under the influence of social culture. According to the results of the study, no significant difference was found between the participants of the two countries in terms of quality skills and other skills. In the related literature, no result has been shared in this context. According to the T-test, the fact that there was no difference between the participants of the two countries can be considered to be related to the overlap of the social structure and cultural codes of the two countries.

In terms of the results obtained, educational administrators in Azerbaijan exhibit more task-oriented behaviours, while educational administrators in Turkey exhibit more individual-oriented behaviours. This result indicates that educational administrators can develop their styles in managerial behaviour and can reveal the impact of personality traits and experiences on managerial skills.

When the regression equation established within the scope of the research model is analysed, it is observed that the dimensions of managerial skills increase life satisfaction. Especially according to the participants in Azerbaijan, "Other Skills and Technical Skills" among the managerial skills of educational administrators have a significant positive impact on life satisfaction. According to the participants in Turkey, among the managerial skills of educational administrators, "taking responsibility" skill has a positive impact on teachers' life satisfaction. This result obtained from the participants in Turkey can be thought to be related to educational administrators in Turkey exhibit more individual-oriented behaviours. These results partially overlap with the results of Akın and Koçak (2007).

Suggestions

Educational organisations are labour-intensive organisations. Educational employees and educational administrators have a great impact on the success and fulfilment of the objectives of these organisations, which are established to meet the educational service needs of society. In this context, educational administrators should show that they value teachers, ensure that they fulfil their duties with continuous high performance, appreciate the life satisfaction of employees and try to increase it.

Policymakers and decision-makers should take steps to improve the managerial skills of educational administrators. In this context, it can be stated that carrying out the necessary studies within the scope of the principles of human resources training and development function will contribute to improving the managerial skills of educational administrators.

Repeating this research in two countries with participant groups in a wider geography will improve the literature based on the relationship between managerial skills and life satisfaction.

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