

Organizational Loneliness of School Administrators[#]

Selda Polat Hüsrevşahi*, *Birsen Şahan*

Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, Kdz. Ereğli/ Zonguldak, Turkey

Corresponding author: Selda Polat Hüsrevşahi, E-mail: seldapolat1@hotmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the loneliness experienced by school administrators, the causes and results of this loneliness, and the ways the administrators cope with loneliness through their experiences. The study employed the phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research designs. The study group consisted of 14 elementary and middle school administrators working in Zonguldak Karadeniz Ereğli. Criteria sampling and snowball sampling techniques were used while determining the study group. The study data were collected with a semi-structured interview form. The school administrators were asked about their loneliness, the reasons and results of their loneliness, and their ways to cope with it. School administrators stated that they mostly experienced loneliness in situations of power hierarchy and during the execution of work. They also stated that their loneliness was caused by organizational communication problems and the personal demands of their colleagues. In addition, school administrators expressed that organizational loneliness caused disruption of work and ineffectiveness at work the most. Finally, they also expressed that they try to overcome loneliness through organizational communication and individual socialization. Comprehensive and social measures should be taken in consideration as well as individual and organizational measures in order to eliminate school administrators' loneliness.

Key words: Loneliness, Organizational Loneliness, School Administration, Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Loneliness refers to the inconsistency between the social relationship levels that individuals desire and that they reached (Perlman & Peplau, 1981). Loneliness is also a distressing process caused by individuals' distancing/alienation from others with whom they have close and intimate relationships (Ernst & Cacioppo, 1999; Wright, 2005; Wright et al., 2006). Rokach (2014) stated that loneliness is temporary, difficult to endure, encourages people to seek meaning, changes according to people's perception, and is a separation experience.

Loneliness is a common experience. According to Cacioppo et al. (2010), millions of people suffer from loneliness, and negative psychological consequences such as deep emptiness, meaninglessness, and lack of personal control can be witnessed in people experiencing loneliness. In addition, low socioeconomic status, marriage, and poor communication with friends and family increase loneliness (cited in Cacioppo et al., 2010). Loneliness associated with physical and psychological problems such as low self-esteem, lack of social communication skills, low life satisfaction, depression, stress, sleep problems, blood pressure, changes in immunity, and cardiological problems (Cacioppo et al., 2010; Rokach, 2014; Xia & Li, 2018).

Organizational loneliness is the feeling of loneliness caused by the lack of desired social relationships built in

individuals' work environment and the inability to overcome this shortcoming (Wright, 2015). Even if individuals do not experience loneliness in their life outside of work, they can experience this feeling within the organization. In the literature, organizational loneliness is classified in two dimensions as social and emotional (Weiss, 1973; Wright, 2005). Social loneliness refers to the loneliness felt by the individuals in their social relationships. This loneliness may manifest itself as the inability of the individuals to communicate with other employees in the organization or to see themselves as part of a social group (Çetin & Alacalar, 2016; Karacaoğlu & Yumuk, 2014; Wright, 2005). Those who experience social loneliness lack the feeling of having a place in a social group and question whether they belong to the group and their ability to communicate with others (Wright, 2005).

Emotional loneliness is the inability of individuals to form close relationships with others (Yılmaz & Altınok, 2009). In the emotional loneliness dimension, the individuals believe that they are not understood by their coworkers and therefore do not open their feelings and thoughts to them. The individuals who think of themselves as being excluded puts a boundary between themselves and other employees because they feel uneasy (Çetin & Alacalar, 2016).

Two important consequences of organizational loneliness for the organization are that it reduces employee

and organization performance. This negative impact on employees' performance is associated with factors such as increased intention to quit, low job satisfaction, weakened organizational commitment, workplace stress, and alienation (Achor et al., 2018; Ayazlar & Guzel, 2014; Çetin & Alacalar, 2016; Ertürk, & Erdirencelebi, 2018; Lam & Lau, 2012; Ozcelik & Barsade, 2018; Wright, 2005). Its negative impact on organizational performance is that it affects other employees in the team and creates a risk factor for organizational success (Stallard, 2019; Zhou, 2018).

In organizations, loneliness is not only witnessed in workers but also in managers. Managers experience organizational loneliness due to their position (Rokach, 2014; Wright, 2012; Zumaeta, 2018). Not wanting to appear weak to other employees, managers may tend not to reveal their feelings. However, this tendency can result in high levels of stress and frustration. Furthermore, these situations may lead to managers stepping down from their positions and organizational burnout (Ozcelik & Barsade, 2018).

The existence of loneliness in educational organizations that has a predominant social aspect and educational administrators was also put forth in studies (Bauer & Silver, 2018; Callan & Levinson, 2011; Drago-Severson, 2012; House, 2016; Izgar, 2009; Jazzar & Kimball, 2019; O'Brien & Gronn, 2012; Riggins, 2020; Rokach, 2014; Sarpkaya, 2014). In schools where educational production is carried out, school administrators, teachers, and other employees are expected to develop and maintain a common vision for higher success. In other words, teaching in schools is executed in a group context, and many problems faced by the administrator, teacher or other employees as members of the group may affect the work of the whole group. The attribution of the success and failure of the organizations to the managers and the high social expectations about education necessitate the increased cooperation of school administrators with other components in schools. However, the loneliness of school administrators will not only damage the expected cooperation but also weaken their courage to be creative and innovative.

Educational organizations are organizations in which certain behavior patterns are determined by rules (such as the role of the administrator and the teacher) based on social legitimacy, and where the determined tasks (educational objectives) are carried out with a certain internal mechanism (such as laws and regulations). In other words, although the boundaries of changes and innovations that educational organizations can introduce within the system are not very wide, educational organizations are organizations where change and transformation are attained. Being organizations that constitute the concrete source of knowledge and accumulation, and being mediators of social development and change distinguish educational organizations from other organizations. One of the main points in this distinction is the solidarity that school components exhibit in combining their knowledge, experience, and forces to raise their production to a higher level, with the understanding of "unity comes from strength". Failure of administrators to take part in this relationship of solidarity, which is inevitable at the

organizational level, may lead to a deficiency in forming a common belief, and this deficiency may lead to the weakening of the organizational purpose.

The present study aims to put forth the loneliness experienced by school administrators, the causes and results of this loneliness, and the ways the administrators cope with loneliness. Although this study is similar to other studies, it differs from the others in that it also discusses the ways school administrators cope with loneliness. Furthermore, it is believed that revealing the factors affecting school administrators' loneliness experiences, the results of this loneliness, and their ability to cope with loneliness will contribute to the studies of researchers in the field of educational sciences and educational administrators.

METHOD

Study Design

Examining the loneliness experienced by school administrators, the causes and results of this loneliness, and the ways the administrators cope with loneliness, this study employed phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs. With the phenomenology design, information about individuals' feelings, thoughts, and perceptions about events or situations are revealed (Creswell, 2012; Mertens, 2005). It is not possible to make exact and accurate measurements of social events and phenomena. In this context, qualitative research provides an in-depth study of human behaviors that have a continuous structure by creating a more flexible study area, rather than explaining them by drawing rigid boundaries within the cause and effect relationship (Patton, 2002).

Study Group

In phenomenological research, the researcher needs individuals from a certain group who have sufficient knowledge and experience about the phenomenon that he or she will study in-depth (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Based on this, the study was conducted with 14 elementary and middle school administrators working in Zonguldak Karadeniz Ereğli. Criteria sampling and snowball sampling techniques, two of the purposeful sampling methods, were used while determining the study group. The selected sample must meet some conditions in order to obtain rich information about the research subject. The selected sample should be capable of obtaining in-depth information in qualitative research (Patton, 2002). Criterion sampling is a method that provides this opportunity. The criterion determined in the study was that school administrators "should have worked at the same school for at least two years". The reason for the criterion being two years and more is the concern that less than one year is considered as an adaptation period and will not reflect a real experience. The researcher tries to reach the person who has the most knowledge in the universe about the phenomenon or situation with the snowball sampling method. The data collection phase of the research is completed when the data obtained from the people reached a saturated point (Patton, 2002). The reason for choosing the snowball sampling technique

in the study was the idea that administrators who feel lonely and know each other can be a rich source of information on the subject. The participants were coded in the A1, A2 format the demographic information about the participants is presented in Table 1.

Data Collection and Analysis

For data collection, an interview form containing personal information and open-ended questions about loneliness was sent to 14 school administrators via e-mail due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The open-ended questions in the form were as follows:

1. Do you experience loneliness as an administrator in your school? In what situations do you experience loneliness?
2. What are the reasons for your loneliness?
3. What are the negatives of this loneliness reflecting on the school?
4. How do you cope with the feeling of loneliness?

During data collection, first, the form was sent to the school administrator known to the researchers. Then, the other school administrator was reached with the name and contact information received from the first administrator. The other participants were included in the study by following the same method. The participant responses were analyzed by content analysis using the NVivo 10 program. In the content analysis designed with phenomenology, there is an effort to conceptualize the data and reveal the themes that defining the phenomenon. The results are presented in a descriptive narrative, and direct quotations are frequently included. In addition, findings are explained and interpreted

within the framework of the emerging themes and patterns (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

Reliability and Validity Works

In the study, expert opinion was taken to increase the content validity of the data collection tool. Necessary changes were made in the questions within the framework of the feedback received. Also, the codes and themes determined to increase validity were developed with two experts (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). One of the experts whose opinions were taken during the preparation of research questions and data analysis stages works as a faculty member in the field of educational administration and the other in the field of psychological counseling and guidance. For validity and reliability works of a qualitative study, it is necessary to clearly define the characteristics of the participants, to explain the data collection and analysis process in detail, and to support the findings with direct quotations from the participants' views (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Accordingly, the personal information of the people forming the study group was clearly presented, and the data collection process was written in detail and direct quotations from people's opinions are included.

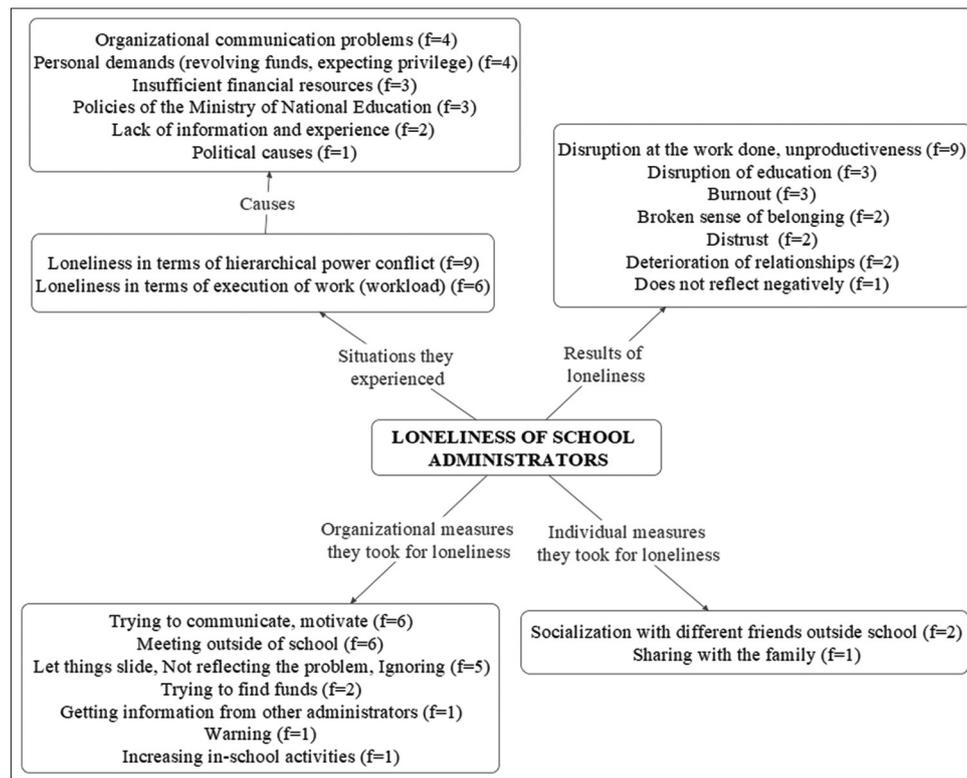
RESULTS

In the study, the themes and sub-themes regarding the situations in which school administrators experience loneliness, the causes and consequences of this loneliness, and their ways of coping with loneliness are presented in Figure 1. Figure 1 gives situation in which school administrators

Table 1. Demographic information about the participants

Code	Sex	Age	Administrative Position	Major	Degree	Administrative Experience	Teaching Seniority
A1	Male	46	Principal	Physics Education	Undergraduate	18	22
A2	Female	40	Vice-Principal	Elementary School Education	Undergraduate	12	17
A3	Male	49	Principal	Turkish	Undergraduate	25	30
A4	Male	45	Vice-Principal	Biology	Undergraduate	6	21
A5	Male	50	Vice-Principal	Electric-Electronics Education	Undergraduate	17	21
A6	Female	42	Principal	Elementary School Education	Undergraduate	11	18
A7	Male	47	Vice-Principal	Electric-Electronics Education	Master's	3	26
A8	Male	41	Vice-Principal	Elementary School Education	Undergraduate	12	18
A9	Male	45	Principal	Turkish Philology	Undergraduate	9	13
A10	Male	44	Principal	Social Studies Education	Undergraduate	4	20
A11	Male	42	Principal	Mathematic	Undergraduate	3	18
A12	Male	51	Principal	Physics	Undergraduate	23	25
A13	Male	50	Principal	Guidance and Psychological Counseling	Master's	23	28
A14	Male	40	Principal	Turkish Philology	Master's	17	20
Mean		45.14				13.28	
Total	12 Male 2 Female		9 Principals 5 Vice -Principals		3 Master's 11 Undergraduate		

Figure 1. Situations in which school administrators experience loneliness, the causes and consequences of loneliness, and their ways of coping with loneliness



experience loneliness and the causes of this loneliness. Then, the results of the loneliness experienced by school administrators and their ways to cope with loneliness are presented.

Findings Regarding the Situations in which School Administrators Experience Loneliness

As can be seen in Figure 1, the situations of loneliness experienced by school administrators were gathered under two themes, namely hierarchical power conflict and execution of works (workload). Nine of the school administrators stated that a hierarchical structure was formed between themselves and the teachers, students, or other administrators in the school due to their powers and that they became lonely as a result. These administrators expressed that they had difficulties in carrying out their roles in terms of executing the work and establishing closeness, that is, in a sense, in terms of protecting the borders in bilateral relationships. The statements of three school administrators who expressed that they experienced loneliness under the *loneliness in terms of hierarchical power conflict theme* are as follows.

You cannot be close as the teacher and the student see you as the authority. Whether we want it or not, we also draw ourselves into loneliness (A10).

As school administrators, we have to fulfill certain roles because of our duties and responsibilities. These roles are mostly about maintaining control over teachers and managing them. This situation inevitably leads to a conflict between my social roles and my administrative roles between the teachers and me as a school administrator. Teachers don't see themselves as equal to their principal.

They make friends with equals like themselves. I think the biggest reason is teachers not seeing us as equals. I think the second reason is the role conflict (A14).

However, although the teachers are my friends, a distance builds up between us over time because we remind them of what they should do (A8).

Another situation where school administrators experience loneliness is discussed under the theme of loneliness in terms of execution of work (workload) (f=6). School administrators, who stated that other administrators and teachers they work with did not perform the assigned tasks at the desired level, did not support them enough support and that they are the only responsible person to meet the school needs, expressed that they were left alone by both other school staff members and the central administration in terms of execution of work. The statements of two school administrators under this theme are as follows:

I feel lonely when I realize that the teachers and vice-principals don't act with me while our school strives to be the best academically, socially, and culturally in the region. When you make decisions to ensure discipline in school, you feel lonely when faced with the reactions of students and teachers (A13).

We administer the schools with a management style in which there is a lot of responsibility but no authority. While the central administration gives all the financial, administrative, social, cultural, educational, social, leadership, and administrative responsibilities of the school, it easily takes the path of calling out during negative situations and blames the lowest administrator, the principal. But it has all authority itself (A14).

Findings Regarding the Causes of School Administrators' Loneliness

The causes of school administrators' loneliness are discussed under the themes of organizational communication problems (f=4), personal demands of coworkers (f=4), insufficient financial school resources (f=3), policies of the Ministry of National Education (f=3), lack of information and experience of principals and vice-principals (f=2), and political reasons (f=1).

Some of the participants who stated that school administrators are seen as the authority because of their powers or that the school staff is trying to communicate with the school administrator to meet their personal interests expressed that there is mutual resistance in such situations. The statements of some of the participants under this theme that was defined as organizational communication problems (f=4) are as follows:

Especially if there is an opinion is that administrators are not fair and that there is discrimination among the personnel, people who think that they are discriminated against do not form a dialogue with the administrators unless they have to. When they form a dialogue, this happens with short sentences. On the other hand, when the personnel expecting positive discrimination from the school administration cannot find what they expect, they also show similar behaviors. When authority has to be used during administration, some personnel oppose this and form a front against the administrator, so to speak. In the teachers' room, they constantly criticize the administrators and try to make other teachers against the administration, too (A5).

I feel lonely in the institution because the teachers withdrawing themselves. This is because one of the general perceptions in schools is that teachers who are close to the principal and who act with the principal are called apple polishers (A13).

Having personal expectations between administrators and coworkers in the school environment and their failure to meet them sometimes can lead to conflicts between individuals or groups. The school administrators who stated that they felt loneliness because they did not meet the demands of their coworkers who demanded privileges from them in terms of flexibility in course hours and the implementation of the joint decisions were included under the theme of personal demands (f = 4). The statements of some of these administrators are as follows.

When I started, the school had been in an administrative vacuum for a while. The school has a considerable monthly income from revolving funds, and this has been shared among some of the administrators. This caused unrest among the teachers. With my arrival as the new principal, it was known that I would intervene in some wrong things and correct the problems, so there was a withdrawal first. People who had been getting a share of this cake started to take things slow, they started to say the system has been working, if it happens, it happens but if it doesn't, you just don't interfere with anything. When I said that the legislation is clear, some things

have been going wrong, they need to be corrected, a resistance immediately popped up in front of me. They started to be indifferent, act differently; they even started not to do their essential duties. When warned, they pulled long faces, gave me a black look, and distanced themselves away from me (A6).

(...) Applying the even the simplest decisions taken together in the board, yard or hall duties, going to class on time, you say you can't enter the schoolyard with your car and you say the schoolyard is for students, they try to enter anyway finding an excuse and try to enter. We can increase the examples. It is as if only I made and approved those decisions (A1).

Personal and prejudiced attitudes such as slacking, saying who cares, regardlessness, selfishness cause loneliness in institutions (A3).

School administrators who stated that policies of the Ministry of National Education lie behind the financial problems in schools and the qualified administrators not being appointed were included under the theme of policy adequacies of the Ministry of National Education (f=3). Two participants' statements under this theme are as follows:

The provincial directorates of the central government, the district director of national education, and the department chief work as if they are desk clerks. They will never leave their offices and visit schools if not for national days and festival ceremonies. In fact, the department chief of support services should go back and forth between the schools, and the provincial special administration and the provincial directorate for national education for the physical needs of the schools. The department chief of human resources should go to schools and see about employees' personal rights on site. The department chief of education should participate in the educational activities of schools (A11).

The understanding of central administration, not appointing top disciplinary chiefs based on merit, favoring instead of merit, following populist policies in education, not ensuring continuity in educational policies (A14).

Some school administrators stated that they were looking for different resources due to the insufficient funds provided to the school in meeting the school's needs. On this subject, the statements of the three school administrators who expressed that they could not receive support from both school staff and provincial directorate for national education are as follows:

The solution to many issues like maintenance of elevators, maintenance of the generator, combi boiler, lamps, windows, doors, pens, photocopy paper, toner, cleaning materials, sports equipment, spending on cultural and artistic events, and insurance of servant staff lies on the shoulders of the school principal. The state doesn't send any funds, the parents don't donate, and teachers don't want to ask for donations from the parents. But, when there is something lacking in the school even if it is very small, they begin to say what the principal does (A1). You are appointed as an employer representative, but you have neither the authority to choose the

personnel nor the financial means to correct the bleeding wound (A10).

The central government leaves administrators alone by not sending funds to schools. School administrators' finance cleaning, painting, repair and maintenance; construction, social activities, and educational activities with magic so to speak (A11).

School administrators stated that all the work was left to them because of the inexperience or lack of knowledge of other school administrators and that they experienced a lot of confusion in the school system in this process. Under the theme of lack of knowledge and experience (f=2), the statements of the two school administrators are as follows:

I am experiencing loneliness because of my two unqualified vice-principals working with me. (...) One of them pulled strings to be appointed, and the other was appointed just with an exam result. They complain about each other to me every morning. How can a principal not feel loneliness when he works with two vice-principals who are like these? One of them has been a vice-principal for three years and the other for one year. They can't even learn how to write. They've been making mistakes every month while doing the teacher salaries. The worst of all is that they can't even work side by side (A1).

The statement of a school administrator who stated that they experienced loneliness due to political reasons (f=1) is as follows:

Pressure groups, especially the unions, alienation, not accepting others, and making the public sphere a part of the union activity. Employees not exactly accepting their institutions' organizational culture and climate, and employees the lack of belonging negatively affect effective and productive relationships among employees. This causes the employees in the institution to become lonely. (...) In particular, attitudes such as displaying a discriminatory attitude and exclusion are encountered. The same people or institutions are always used in the administrative works done. The rewards are given based on these. In addition, I see the approach of teachers to administrators as only passing time. I can't see sincerity. Not internalizing merit and career values, using the public power to personalize this power or against a person (A3).

Findings Regarding the Results of School Administrators' Loneliness

The results of school administrators' loneliness were discussed under the themes of disruption at the work done/unproductiveness (f=9), disruption of education (f=3), burnout (f=3), broken sense of belonging (f=2), distrust (f=2) and deterioration of relationships (f=2). Only one of the school administrators stated that the loneliness experienced by him had no negative repercussions.

A significant portion of the school administrators stated that work is disrupted and unproductiveness increased as a result of loneliness. They also expressed that loneliness leads to distrust among employees, deterioration of relationships and thus has unsuccessful educational reflections,

consequently in the form of unsuccessful education. Under this heading, some of the participants shared the following:

When you encounter obstacles that make you lonely in your job that you started with great enthusiasm like me, you become cumbersome and you come to the point where you cannot make a decision. If any stakeholder of your school sees an administration that can no longer solve problems, this time they lose hope. Especially if teachers, students, and parents have such a perception about the principal and the vice-principals, it means that things will get worse for that school (A1).

Your mood can always be down at school, and you can be unhappy. This means getting further away from your relationships (A2).

The loneliness felt by the schools of administrators at their schools result in a decrease in job productivity for both administrators and teachers, fear of failure among administrators, a sense of distrust among administrators and teachers, and a decrease in the sense of belonging to the school (A5).

Findings Regarding the Ways School Administrators Cope with Loneliness

School administrators' ways of coping with loneliness are discussed under two themes as organizational and individual measures.

Organizational measures

Some of the school administrators stated that they communicate with their colleagues or, if necessary, with students to cope with their loneliness at school. Some of the statements of the participants under the theme of trying to communicate, motivating (f=6) are as follows:

First of all, I continuously make my vice-principals feel that I trust them by emphasizing the importance of being a team. Even if I don't believe it, I emphasize that they can learn and do things very well if they want and that I am ready to help them in any way. (...) I always try to motivate my teachers. I congratulate them and stand by them for every good job they do. I try to explain their mistakes politely without offending them. I never directly say no to my teachers' requests and demands regarding their classrooms and the school. Even if I have to say no, I will explain it. I always try to help them with their curriculum, yard and hall duties, and when they need to take leave because I want to keep them happy and motivated at school. Even in my hardest times, I approach them with a smile and never pass by any of my staff without greeting. I even approach my students with the same smile and a smiling face. Let's put it this way, I act according to any situation and condition. Sometimes I become a Polyanna and distribute happiness, sometimes I become a Dear Abby and listen to problems, doesn't matter if they are teachers or students. Sometimes I become a Hulusi Kentmen and I bring problematic students to reason kindly but firmly (A1).

To prevent the feeling of loneliness, first of all, I try to make an effort to communicate with my employees (school principal, vice-principal, teacher, and assistant staff) to solve the problems that cause this situation (A9).

Some of the school administrators stated that they coped with this feeling by meeting outside of school with colleagues who do not get close to him and who he feels close to. School administrators' statements under the theme of meeting outside (f=6) are as follows:

Getting together with out-of-school activities to improve internal communication (A3).

As an administrator, increasing communication to a higher level by improving friendship relationships by increasing social activities outside of school and spending more time outside of school for teachers to feel safe and have higher job satisfaction (A5).

School administrators (f=2), who believed that they experienced loneliness due to lack of financial resources, stated that they try to find funds to meet the school needs.

(...) We sometimes try to solve our problems by talking about the works we do to the parents with the parent-teacher association and ask for money from a philanthropist parent, in a way we act like beggars. We sometimes try to get funds from the General Directorate of Secondary Education in the Ministry by pulling strings. We also cover some of our expenses from our canteen revenues even if I always say it should be closed to have a healthy generation (A1).

I can only find solutions to issues that will be solved financially through sponsors or philanthropists (A10).

A school administrator (A9) mentioned that he took the opinions of other school administrators to cope more effectively with the problems he experienced at school, not just with the feeling of loneliness. Another school administrator (A6) stated that she tried to find a solution by warning her colleagues who did not do their duties. Another school administrator stated that he was tried to create a more positive school climate to increase the school-family interaction and the interaction between the school staff. The statement of this administrator is as follows:

Using opportunities with the parents and students to develop various activities related to the school climate and culture, giving feedback, and providing information. Developing cultural and artistic activities in school, making that these reach all the stakeholders, and increasing the school belonging awareness (A3).

Individual measures

School administrators either socialize with other school administrators or share their problems with their families to cope with their feeling of loneliness. The statements of these participants are as follows:

(...) The feeling of loneliness is tried to be decreased with the school administrators, and other teacher friends who you form friendship at school and outside school have established sincerity in and out of school. The feeling of loneliness is also alleviated by spending time with the family (A10).

Some of the solutions are forming friendships with the other administrators in the school and spending more time with them, and forming friendships with other administrators from other schools (A14).

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to determine the causes and results of organizational loneliness the school administrators experience in their schools, and the measures they take against loneliness. The study showed that school administrators experience organizational loneliness.

School administrators stated that they experience loneliness because of hierarchical power relationships and workload. The feeling of loneliness experienced due to hierarchy is similar to other study findings (Alison, 1997; House, 2016; Izgar, 2009; Jazzar & Kimball, 2019; Riggins, 2020; Yılmaz & Altınok, 2009). For example, in a study conducted with 643 elementary and middle school principals, half of the school administrators mentioned that they experienced loneliness and dissatisfaction with their work because of their positions in the workplace (Alison, 1997). This can be explained by the lack of social support due to the hierarchical position of administrators (Wright, 2005; Zysberg, 2015). Considering that lack of social support is psychologically wearing, the opposite strengthens wellbeing and helps protect the employee from blood pressure, depression, emotional exhaustion, and other health problems (Wright, 2005). For example, two separate studies (Karakurt, 2012; Yılmaz & Aslan, 2013) explored the effect of teachers working at the same school engaging in social activities among themselves outside the school on their loneliness levels. These studies determined that loneliness levels of those who do not participate in social activities are significantly higher. These results support the argument that a lack of social support may lead to a feeling of loneliness.

In the study, school administrators also stated that they experience loneliness due to their workload. The scope of the school administration's responsibility area may play a role in the feeling of loneliness. In this context, Rokach (2014) argued that school administrators may experience conflict, anger, isolation, and loneliness while responding to the demands of society, institutions, and school staff.

School administrators participating in the study listed organizational communication problems, personal demands of colleagues, insufficient financial resources of the school, policies of the Ministry of National Education, lack of information and experience of administrators, and political reasons as the causes for their loneliness. The reasons listed are related to each other, even though one seems to be independent of the other. Hence, the causes are discussed in association with each other.

Organizational communication problems were explained by the administrators as others not communicating with them. This is an interesting result. The horizontal organizational structures of schools are horizontal allows everyone to communicate more easily with each other regardless of the superior-subordinate relationship known as cross-communication (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1996).

However, the aforementioned interesting result can be explained by the statements of the school administrators that teachers communicate with them for their personal gains. Some of the studies conducted in Turkey put forth that school administrators have favoritistic attitudes (Argon, 2016; Aydoğan, 2009; Polat & Hiçyılmaz, 2017). Situations in which some people are protected due to favoritism, nepotism, cronyism, or patronage and others are marginalized may be considered culture-specific rather than profession-specific.

As it is known, Hofstede (1993; 2001) explained organizations by associating them with social culture in his Theory of Cultural Dimensions. The individualist-collectivist dimension of the theory also defines the characteristics of societies. While in individualistic cultures people define themselves as independent from others in the community, in collectivist cultures people define themselves as part of their family or communities that they feel important. According to Hofstede et al.'s (2010) study, Turkey is one of the countries displaying "low individualistic" characteristics. Taken in this context, the studies conducted in Turkey put forth that teachers are exposed to ostracism from their administrators the most because of their different political views (Polat & Hiçyılmaz, 2017; Erdemli & Kurum, 2019). While teachers think like this, the loneliness of school administrators, who are on the opposite plane of the same social organization, may get clearer. As a matter of fact, in this study, school administrators cited political reasons as another reason for their loneliness. In addition, in Turkey, having the same political views and being a member of the same union has a very significant effect on the appointment of school administrators. Unions close to the government may get involved in the appointment of school administrators. Studies on this subject (Akcan et al., 2017; Özyayın & Han, 2014) support this finding. This explains the fact that a small number of school administrators who were not appointed as school administrators through political or union channels describe themselves as feeling lonely. This also explains the fact that school administrators give their other administrator colleagues' lack of information and experience as their reason for their loneliness. It can be said that the administrative posts are assigned based on political views rather than merit. Lack of information and experience can reduce organizational performance, increase other administrators' workload and loneliness.

Lack of financial resources in schools and the policies of the Ministry of National Education constituted the other reasons for administrators' loneliness. Due to the neoliberal education policies that were put into practice after 1980 and accelerated after the 1990s, public school funds were reduced, and school administrators turned to seek different resources for their school expenses. There are many studies on the subject (Zoraloğlu et al., 2004; Köse & Şaşmaz, 2014; Özer et al., 2015; Toker Gökçe & Uslu, 2018; Yolcu, 2007; Yamaç, 2010). The studies revealed that school administrators have conflicts with parents, teachers, and their surroundings due to fundraising (Zoraloğlu et al., 2004; Özer et al., 2015). It can be said that multifaceted conflict leads to stress and sadness and that they cause loneliness.

The results of loneliness were generally explained by school administrators with organizational inefficiency. This

was followed by burnout, broken sense of belonging, distrust, and deterioration of relationships. Organizational inefficiency is a result similar to results of other studies on loneliness (Achor et al., 2018; Ayazlar & Guzel, 2014; Cigna, 2018; Ertürk, & Erdirençelebi, 2018; Lam & Lau, 2012; Ozcelik & Barsade, 2018; Wright, 2005; Yılmaz, 2008). Studies revealed that employees' feeling of loneliness leads to the weakening of social relations and the decrease in their commitment to their workplace, thus affecting their intention to quit (Ozcelik & Barsade, 2018; Wright, 2005). Although the fact that the study was conducted with school administrators working in public schools limits their intention to quit, it explains the relationship between commitment, burnout and organizational inefficiency. Indeed, a study conducted in Turkey (Akan & Kılıç, 2019) determined a positive and significant relationship between school administrators' commitment and the school's effectiveness.

The present study revealed that school administrators took organizational and individual measures to cope with loneliness. Organizational measures were mostly about increasing communication such as establishing communication, meeting outside, and increasing in-school activities. As it is known, organizational communication increases interaction by facilitating the expression of feelings and emotions, as well as providing information to organization members and controlling organizational effort (George & Jones, 1999, 453). Communication is also a fundamental part of the organizational climate because organizational climate refers to the mixture of the employees' feelings in the organization, the characteristics of the organization, and the employees' psychological conditions (Erdoğan, 2002). Therefore, the measures taken by school administrators to increase communication can also be a source of forming positive emotions, as well as being a solution to relieving loneliness.

School administrators reported that they overcame loneliness by socializing with different friends outside of school or by sharing it with their families. Behavior related to happiness, mood, and well-being can be considered in the plane of life satisfaction (Vara, 1999; Karabulut & Özer, 2003). One of the criteria of life satisfaction emerges when individuals evaluate their life quality in areas such as family, school, and friends as a whole (Christopher, 1999). As stated before, loneliness refers to the negative emotions that arise with the increase of the difference between the social relationships that individuals desire and their existing social relationships. In this context, school administrators' efforts to establish positive relationships with their families and friends to close this difference may increase their well-being or life satisfaction. As a matter of fact, there is a negative relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness (Goodwin, Cook & Yung, 2001; Schumaker et al., 1993; Yılmaz & Altınok, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The present study determined that school administrators experienced loneliness and found individual and organizational solutions to cope with their loneliness. The causes and results of loneliness are similar to the results of other studies

both conducted in Turkey and other countries. However, the neoliberal education policies implemented by the Ministry of Education, which cause loneliness can be examined in depth. As a matter of fact, in this study, school administrators expressed this situation as political reasons and lack of resources in schools. Since the feeling of loneliness that these may cause cannot be eliminated by individual and organizational measures, the negative consequences that may arise may be more comprehensive and social. School administrators have an important role in the cooperation of students, teachers, students' parents and other staff working in the school and in the development of the school. The loneliness problem experienced by school administrators, whether it is caused by the individual or the organization, causes negative outcomes not only on the administrator but also on the other people in the institution. Individual, organizational and national measures should be taken to eliminate this problem. In addition, female school administrators' loneliness may be examined in Turkey in the context of gender.

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