The Effect of the Principals' Perfectionism on Organizational Stress *

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Abstract: This study aims to reveal the effect of the principals' perfectionism on organizational stress of teachers according to the perceptions of the teachers who are working in primary and secondary schools and the level of organizational stress of teachers. The sample of the study consisted of 369 teachers by choosing with the method of simple random sampling. Data was collected by a "positive-negative perfectionism scale" and "perception of stress scale". Data analysis was analyzed by using IBM SPSS 21.0 program by using hierarchical multiple linear regression method. At the end of this study, it was seen that principals' negative and positive perfectionist behaviours predict teachers' organizational stress in a meaningful way. It was understood that positive and negative perfectionist behaviours increased the factors of organizational stress, and it was also seen that principals' negative perfectionist behaviours increased the stress in organizational structure. As a suggestion, principals need to exhibit their perfectionist behaviours in a correct and positive manner. This situation enables teachers to increase their dependence to their jobs. It is also recommended that principals should investigate the effects of perfectionism on their management abilities, competitive attitudes and leadership qualities.

Keywords: *Perfectionism, organizational stress, principal, teacher.*

Introduction

The intricacies of the school principals' expectations cause a high level of stress which affects the school environment negatively in addition to the efficiency of the principal (Akdogan, 2003). The stress which affects the school principals who are the key stones of education and the idea of which to minimise negative effects of stress upon the workers and school function can be shown as the main reason to perform this study.

Having studied the literature, regarding about the term perfectionism it is possible to come up with many definitions. Some of these definitions are given below. According to Strip and Hirsche (2000), perfectionism is not to be pleased with anything that doesn't have high standards and is not perfect. Freud (1959) associates the basis of the studies about perfectionism with psychoanalytic theory. Freud has defined perfectionism as "a feature of superego and an extreme desire for achieving success". If a school principal determines goals which are beyond the staff's ability, this can cause the staff to become alienated from these goals (Sisman, 2011; Balci, 2005). What is required of the school principal is not maximum perfectionism which is oriented to the effectiveness of the school or extreme perfectionism which ignores the background to the problem (Balci, 1991). With the effect of perfectionism stress can be an additional factor (Polman, Borkoles & Nicholls, 2010). It has been emphasized that it is necessary to avoid perfectionist behaviour to put up actively with stress, and established that overpassing deficiencies decreases occupational stress (Zhang, Gan & Cham, 2007).

Antony and Swinson (2000) have determined a number of characteristics of perfectionism. The all or nothing principle is dominant among perfectionists. Perfectionists think that events happen in stages and right and wrong or good and bad have more than one dimension, and they tend to see events in the fast lane. Perfectionists lead positive details to minimise until not seen by maximising negative details. This causes positive details to be overlooked. Perfectionists think they can read minds and they generally think people think negatively about them. Perfectionists consistently focus on details and for this reason don't see the general situation. The ideas of others are very important for

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perfectionists. They want to gain recognition of others. Perfectionists see negative details as a hindrance and display escapist behaviour. Since they live life in the fast lane, perfectionists reject the tendency to be pleased with minor things or events. There is no minor for them. They have extreme responsibility and need of control (Frost, 1990). Perfectionists feel responsible for every negative situation that happens around them. For this reason, they see themselves in the role of making behaviour and controlling thinking. Perfectionists program the work which is done and make rules, and feel inadequate when these rules are not obeyed. When they are dealing with business, they have difficulty in determining the people to assign tasks. Perfectionists bring their feeling of inadequacy to the forefront as they see the positive characteristics of people they encounter and focus on their own negative characteristics (Antony & Swinson, 2000).

Stress continues to be a problem for schools as it affects the job success of teachers and the contribution of teachers in their profession (Isikhan, 2004). Stress has some effects on organizations along with physiological, psychological, behavioral, emotional and mental effects. We can list the effects of stress on organizations as below (Tutar, 2000). An individual who starts his/her job unwillingly cannot be effective or productive (Pehlivan, 1995). Unexcused absence is more about job dissatisfaction rather than excused absence (Telman & Unsal, 2004). The results of not being proud of your job and not trusting his/her efficiencies are indifferent towards the job. The commitment of the individual towards organizational goals can decrease or vanish (Varol, 1991).

One of the main factors comprising stress is the perfectionist characteristics of the managers or staff working in the organization (Balci, 2000). Perfectionism is a personality trait of which an individual shows extreme effort to gain the desired situation (Akdogan, 2003). Some perfectionists have some common traits. They generally have a neat appearance and are organised. They take up much harder conditions compared to other people and they also push other people to harder conditions similar to themselves. From an external perspective, they generally look competent and self-sufficient. Very often they are envied by others because they are perceived as "self-contained". Sometimes they really look perfect. However, they don't feel the same within. They don't think they have control in their lives (Antony & Swinson, 2009).

Stress is seen equivalent to meanings such as pressure or being in tension in general. The meaning of the term stress depends on which context it is used. From one perspective, stress is a group of difficulties which keep people alive and excited. On the other handi it is not being able to meet demands physically or psychologically which are undertaken by individuals and conditions which can force them to collapse. Mitra (2008), defines stress as "intentionally forcing the human body to a process which is completely hard to get out of by showing out-of-control reactions without allowing the individual to preventing it most of the time.

The emotional symptoms of stress are immediate cry of the individual, depression, lack of self-confidence, and the physical symptoms are generally ulcer, appetite disorders, distractibility (Gulbeyaz, 2006). Today as a classic term, stress is defined as the body's reaction towards any unspecific intention which is undertaken by the body (Guclu, 2001). Some of the studied mental symptoms of stress are decrease in production, complicated thinking of the mind, memory loss, distrust, extreme use of accusation or defense mechanism, focusing on people's mistakes (Sabuncuoglu & Tuz, 2001).

It is known that employees who are working in organizations experience difficulties, anxiety and worries due to reasons rising from themselves and their surroundings. As a result of this, they cannot be a whole with the organization and a lack of efficient work and satisfaction arise. Stress can create specific problems over people. These problems decrease of happiness of people and the relation level with the surroundings (Baltas & Baltas, 2001).

As a result of stress, the productivity of work lowers as the individual is alienated from work life. Deaths increase. The reason of most sicknesses is stress. The majority of physical disorders are stress-factorial (Sabuncuoglu & Tuz, 2001). In many researches done in big countries such as the United States of America and England, it has put forward that the majority of hospital expenses result from stress which can not be balanced and work-based (Okutan & Tengilimoglu, 2002). Furthermore, in situation of which teachers are not satisfied with the school they work in, there are research results showing that the teachers have the intention of changing schools or quitting their job (Cepni, Cerrah & Bacanak, 2002).

Differentiating the reactions given to the situation within to overcome the stress is called stress management. There are many different methods to overcome stress. The most important ones are the personal methods. The most important factor in personal methods is that individuals try to neutralize by controlling their habits with their behavioral, physical and psychological reactions (Pehlivan, 1995). To overcome stress, you can fit your life into various programs and live more beneficially (Baltas & Baltas, 2001). Every organisation develops various stressful situations according to the work done, the technology it uses, environmental conditions, the knowledge and experience of the employees, the grouping between workers, the atmosphere and other factors (Ertekin, 1993). In times of tension, resources are used unproductively and this causes negative economy and low working level (Ozdayi, 1990).

In the working environment many things which handicap the staff can be stress related. The most encountered ones are to be sacked, extreme working hours, not being promoted in spite of working hard, routine jobs, not being able to

submit work on time, fear of not being successful, not getting enough support, too much work load, extreme rules, lack of communication among people, work politics, unfair rewards or payments and differences between social values of the employees (Perrewe & Victory, 1988; DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998).

The Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to determine the relation between the perfectionism level of principals' and the stress level of teachers according to the teachers' perceptions who work in primary and secondary schools and determine how the perfectionist approach and behaviour of school principals predict the stress they generate among teachers. The prediction of the teachers' stress puts forward the mediating effect of the perfectionist behaviour of the school principals.

The perfectionist behaviour of school principals according to teachers' perceptions working in primary and secondary school;

1. At what level is the positive-negative perfectionist state of the school principals and the teachers' stress?
2. What is the relation between the perfectionism of the school principals and the stress level of teachers?
3. How is the prediction of the positive perfectionism of teachers about the frequency of the factors rising from stress in the organisation?
4. How is the prediction of the negative perfectionism of teachers about the frequency of the factors rising from stress in the organisation?
5. How is the prediction of the positive perfectionism of teachers about the frequency of how the organisation deals with stress?
6. How is the prediction of the negative perfectionism of teachers about the frequency of how the organisation deals with stress?

Method

Research Sample

The research sample was comprised of 369 teachers of many different fields working in public schools of Sanliurfa in the 2014-2015 academic year. The research was a descriptive study in which the relational screening model was used. Within the state schools, primary and secondary schools had been included in the study.

Other descriptive information about the research staff of the teachers attending the research was summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Information Related to the Research Group of the Teachers Attending the Research

Tables	Groups	N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	173	46,9
	Female	196	53,1
	Total	369	100
Marital Status	Married	289	78,3
	Single	80	21,7
	Total	369	100
Age	20 – 30	87	23,6
	31 – 40	190	51,5
	41 – 50	37	10
	50 and over	55	14,9
	Total	369	100
Term of Service	1 – 5	166	45
	6 – 10	121	32,8
	11 – 15	62	16,8
	15 and over	20	5,41
	Total	369	100
Educational Background	Post graduate	62	16,8
	Undergraduate	288	78,1
	Postgraduate	19	5,1
	Total	369	100
Branch	Class Teacher	232	62,9
	Branch Teacher	137	37,1
	Total	369	100

According to the gender variable of teachers, the 173 (46,9%) were males and 196 (53,1%) were females. According to the marital status variable, 289 (78,3%) were married and 80 (21,7%) were single. According to the age variable, 87 (23,6%) people were between 20 and 30, 190 (51,5%) people were between 31 and 40, 37 (10,05%) were between 41-50, 55 (14,9%) people were 50 and over. According to the term of office variable, 166 (45,0%) people were between 1 and 5 years, 121 (32,8%) people were between 6 and 10 years, 62 (16,8%) people were between 11 and 15 years, 20 (5,4%) people were 15 years and over. According to the educational background variable, 62 (16,8%) people were from the training institute –associate degree, 288 (78,1%) people were undergraduates, 19 (5,1%) people were postgraduates. According to the field of study variable, 232 (62,9%) people were class teachers, 137 (37,1%) were branch teachers.

Data Gathering Tools

In this study, a perceived stress scale was developed by Cohen, Kamarck and Mermelste (1983) and whose adaptation to Turkish done by Bilge, Ogce, Genc and Oran (2007) has been used. In this scale, a five point likert scale has been used for each item. In the reliability study, the Cronbach's Alpha value was found 0,81.

The Positive-Negative Perfectionism Scale was developed by Kirdok (2004). In this scale which was prepared to measure the perfectionism features of preliminary adolescents attending the second stage of primary school, a five point likert scale has been used for each item. As a result of the reliability analysis done by Kirdok (2004), the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale has been measured as 0,810 for the positive perfectionism sub scale and 0,781 for the negative perfectionism sub scale.

Data Analyses Techniques Used in the Research

In the statistical analyses of the data, the data has been resolved with the aid of descriptive analysis, t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for independent variables and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multilinear Regression Analysis via the SSPS 21.0 packet program.

Findings

The results of arithmetic averages and standard deviation values showing perceptions related to the frequency of experiencing factors and dealing with stress causing the stress of which the positive-negative perfectionist behaviours of the school principals bring about in teachers in the research were shown in Table 2. In the perceptions of the teachers about their principals it has been put forward of which the five-point Likert-scale responses do the teachers use more.

Table. 2 The average, standard errors and standard deviations of the perfectionism level of school principals and the organisational stress level of teachers

Variables	$\overline{X}$	Std. Error	*S.S.*
Stress Level (General)	**2,81**	**0,02**	**0,521**
The frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress	3,01	0,041	0,791
Frequency of dealing with stress	2,61	0,035	0,613
Perfectionism			
Positive	3,51	0,037	0,738
Negative	3,29	0,046	0,832

After having observed Table 2, it could be seen that the averages of the sizes of the stress level, the frequency of experiencing the factors causing the stress (x=3,01) and the frequency of dealing with stress (x=2,61) were in the range of 2,61-3,40 (Sometimes). According to this, participants evaluated the frequency of experiencing the factors causing the stress and the frequency of dealing with stress at a medium level. They also evaluated their cases of dealing with it as medium level at general stress level (x=2,81).

It could be seen that their average of positive perfectionism was at the range of 3,41-4,20 (most of the time). According to this, it could be said that participants evaluated their positive perfectionism positively at a high level. Furthermore, it was seen that their average of negative perfectionism was in the range of 2,61-3,40 (sometimes). According to this, it could be said that participants evaluated their own negative perfectionism as medium level.

The perceived stress level scale sub-dimensions and perfectionism scale were discussed in general. The correlation relation of the perceived stress level scale sub-dimensions and the perfectionism scale was given in Table 3.

Table 3. The correlation table of the Organisational Stress Level of Teachers and the Perfectionism Level of School Principals

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Frequency of experiencing stress	1				
2. The frequency of dealing with stress	0,084	1			
3. Stress level (general)	,811***	,651***	1		
4. Positive perfectionism	,457***	0,016	,357***	1	
5. Negative perfectionism	,398***	0,082	,255***	,271***	1

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

As seen in Table 3, there was a high relation between the general stress level behaviour and the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the stress level features (r=0.811). Since it was r^2=0.658, the 65,8% of the general stress level behaviour could be explained with the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress.

There was a low relation between positive perfectionism which was the subdivision of perfectionist features and the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress which was subdivision of stress level (r=0,457). Since it was r^2=0,209, 20,9% of positive perfectionist behaviour could be explained with the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress.

There was a low relation between negative perfectionist behaviour which was the subdivision of perfectionist features and the frequency of experiencing factors causing stress which was the subdivision of stress level (r=0,398). Since it was r^2=0,158, 15,8% of negative perfectionist behaviour could be explained with the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress.

There was a medium-level relation between the general stress level behaviour of the stress level features and the frequency of dealing with stress which was the subdivision of stress level (r=0,651). Since it was r^2=0,424, 42,4% of the behaviour of the general stress level can be explained with the frequency of dealing with stress.

There was a low relation between positive perfectionist behaviour which was the subdivision of perfectionist features and the general stress level behaviour of the stress level features (r=0,357). Since it was r^2=0,127, 12,7% of the positive perfectionist behaviour could be explained with the behaviour of the general stress level.

There was a low relation between negative perfectionist behaviour which was the subdivision of the perfectionist features and the general stress level behaviour of the stress level features (r=0,255). Since it was r^2=0,065, 6,5% of the negative perfectionist behaviour could be explained with the behaviour of the general stress level.

There was a low relation between negative perfectionist behaviour which was the subdivision of the perfectionist features and positive perfectionist behaviour which was the subdivision of perfectionist features (r=0,271). Since it was r^2=0,073, 7,3% of negative perfectionist behaviour could be explained with positive perfectionist behaviour.

The basic linear regression analysis of the positive perfectionism in teachers related to the prediction of the organization about the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress in teachers has been carried out and the results related to at what degree positive perfectionism affect the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the organization are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The results of basic linear regression analysis related to the prediction of the organization about the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the positive perfectionism in teachers

		B	Std. Error	β	T	p
1st Step	Constant	2,570	,104		24,667	,000
	Gender (Dummy)	,475	,083	,297	5,751	,000
	Age	,001	,056	,002	,024	,981
	Years of seniority	,105	,060	,123	1,749	,081
2nd Step	Constant	1,287	,193		6,679	,000
	Gender (Dummy)	,238	,083	,149	2,887	,004
	Age	-,021	,052	-,026	-,405	,686
	Years of seniority	,102	,056	,119	1,822	,069
	Positive Perfectionism	,416	,054	**,383***	7,706	**,000**

Dependent Variable: The frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress

ΔR^2= 0,123 *** (*p<0,05 **p<0,01 ***p<0,001)

As seen in Table 4, the functioning of the organization structure of the positive perfectionist behavior in teachers was significantly predicted (β=0,383; p<0,001). A unit increase in positive perfectionist behavior caused a unit of 0,383 increase in the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress. After having observed the given variance, it could be explained that 12,3% of the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress was taken place via positive perfectionist behaviour (ΔR^2=0,123; p<0,001).

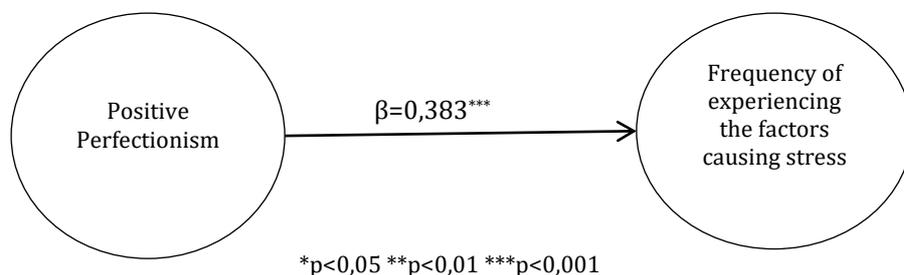*p<0,05 **p<0,01 ***p<0,001

Figure 1. The effect of positive perfectionism in teachers over the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the organisation

The frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the organization of the positive perfectionism in teachers attending the research as a response to the question "how is the prediction of the positive perfectionism in teachers about the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the organization?" was predicted significantly and was shown in Figure 1 (β=0,383, p<0,001).

The basic linear regression analysis related to the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the organization of the positive perfectionism in teachers has been carried out and the results related to at what rate does negative perfectionism affects the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the organization were shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The results of linear regression analysis related to the prediction negative perfectionism in teachers about the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the organization

		B	Std. Err.	β	t	p
1.Step	Stable	2,57	0,104		24,667	0
	Gender (Dummy)	0,475	0,083	0,297	5,751	0
	Age	0,001	0,056	0,002	0,024	0,981
	Service Year	0,105	0,06	0,123	1,749	0,081
2. Step	Stable	1,428	0,159		8,974	0
	Gender (Dummy)	0,552	0,075	0,345	7,318	0
	Age	-0,011	0,05	-0,014	-0,224	0,823
	Service Year	0,007	0,056	0,008	0,123	0,902
	Negative Perfectionism	0,398	0,045	**,416*****	8,922	0

Dependent Variable: The frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress
ΔR^2= 0,158 *** (*p<0,05 **p<0,01 ***p<0,001)

As seen in Table 5, the negative perfectionist behavior in teachers predicted the function of the organization structure significantly (β=0,416; p<0,001). A unit increase in the negative perfectionist behavior caused a value of 0,416 increase in the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress. After having observed the given variance, 15,8% of the frequency of the experiencing the factors causing stress was explained with the negative perfectionist behavior (ΔR^2=0,158; p<0,001).
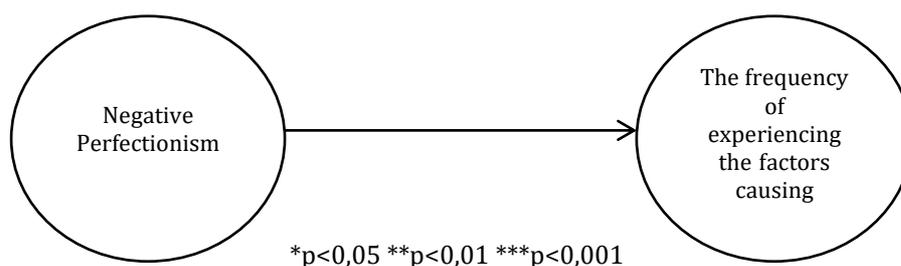

*p<0,05 **p<0,01 ***p<0,001

Figure. 2 The effect of negative perfectionism in teachers over the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the organization

The frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the organization of the positive perfectionism in teachers attending the research as a response to the question "how is the prediction of the negative perfectionism in teachers about the frequency of experiencing the factors causing stress of the organization?" was predicted significantly and was shown in Figure 2 (β=0,416, p<0,001).

The linear regression analysis related to the prediction of the positive perfectionism in teachers about the frequency of dealing with stress of the organization has been carried out and after having observed the findings related to at what rate positive perfectionism affects the frequency of dealing with stress of the organization; it was seen that positive perfectionist behavior in teachers did not predict the dependent variable of the frequency of the dealing with stress significantly (β=0,053, p=0,345>0,05).

The basic linear regression analysis related to the prediction of the negative perfectionism in teachers about the frequency of dealing with the stress of the organization has been carried out, and after having observed the findings related to at what rate negative perfectionism affects the frequency of dealing with stress of the organization, it was seen that negative perfectionist behavior in teachers did not predict the dependent variable of the frequency of dealing with stress significantly (β=-0,044, p=0,416<0,001).

Conclusion and Discussion

In this section, the results of the analysis carried out to determine the relation between the perfectionism level of school principals and the organisational stress level of teachers working in primary and secondary schools have been submitted. In the regression analyses carried out demographic variables (gender, seniority and age) have been added to all the models as control variables. The direct effects of independent variable positive and negative perfectionist behaviour in general to the dependent variable organisational stress have been measured. As a result of these relations, an analysis about the effects of organisational stress has been implemented.

Having observed the positive and negative perfectionist behaviour of school principals and the stress level of teachers, it was seen that the positive-negative perfectionism of school principals affect the general stress level capacity of teachers at a rate of (2,81). According to this result, we can come to conclusion that the positive-negative perfectionist behaviour of school principals cause stress among teachers, and that teachers can deal with this stress at a "medium" level. This result established in the study of Stoeber and Rennert (2008) titled "Perfectionism in Teachers: Coping Styles in Stress and Relations" that most of the teachers are affected by stress and this situation rises from the perfectionist personality trait. At the same time, it has been determined that perfectionism has both positive and negative aspects. Perfectionism has been evaluated in many aspects and it has seen that perfectionist efforts also have positive effects. This result runs parallel with the results of the research.

Having observed the relation between the perfectionism of school principals and the stress level of teachers, there are a number of conclusions that can be drawn:

a. High relation level between general stress level behaviour of stress level features and the frequency of behaviour of the factors causing the stress,
b. Low relation level between the positive perfectionist behaviour which is the sub-dimension perfectionism features and the frequency of behaviour of the factors causing the stress which is the sub-dimension of the stress level,
c. Low relation level between negative perfectionist behaviour which is the sub-dimension of perfectionism features and the frequency of behaviour of the factors causing the stress which is the sub-dimension of the stress level,
d. A medium relation level between the general stress level behaviour of the stress level features and the behaviour of dealing with stress which is sub-dimension of the stress level,
e. Low relation level between positive perfectionist behaviour which is the sub-dimension of perfectionism features and the general stress level behaviour of the stress level features,
f. Low relation level between negative perfectionist behaviour which is the sub-dimension of perfectionism features and the general stress level behaviour of the stress level features,
g. Low relation level between negative perfectionist behaviour which is the sub-dimension of perfectionism features and positive perfectionist behaviour which is the sub-dimension of perfectionism features.

After having observed the frequency rate of the factors causing stress of the organization of the positive perfectionism in teachers, it was seen that the positive perfectionist behaviour in teachers predicted the function of the organisation structure significantly (β-0,383; p<0,001). According to this result, the positive perfectionism of school principals affects the cases causing the stress in teachers at a low level. Negative perfectionist behaviour in teachers predicted the function of the organizational structure significantly (β=0,416; p<0,001). According to this, the negative perfectionism of school principals affects the cases causing the stress in teachers more rather than the positive perfectionism.

It was seen that the positive perfectionist behaviour in teachers did not predict the function of the organisational structure significantly according to the dependent variable of the frequency of dealing with stress (β=0,053,

p=0,345>0,05). According to this result, it was seen that the positive perfectionism of positive principals did not affect the frequency of dealing with stress of the teachers. It was seen in teachers that negative perfectionist behaviour did not predict the function of the organisational structure significantly according to the dependent variable of the frequency of dealing with stress (β=-0,044, p=0,416<0,001). According to this result, it was seen that the negative perfectionism of school principals did not affect the frequency of dealing with stress of teachers.

In this process, it was seen that the negative perfectionist behaviours of school principals did not cause stress in teachers. As a result, it was seen that principals who develop positive perfectionism features and determine achievable goals know where and how to display these behaviours, and in conclusion of this teachers who they work with will be more satisfied and pleased in their working environment.

Recommendations

The determining of the school principals of their own perfectionism may push them to display healthier attitude and behaviour. As a result of this, school managers are aware of their perfectionism and can be taken under vocational training about the perfectionism being in their control. For teacher candidates in universities, a curriculum related to perfectionism and stress subjects should be developed. The disadvantages of negative perfectionism and methods and techniques dealing with stress should be the main point of this curriculum. In this aspect, training about how the perfectionist behaviour and stress relation is important for schools can be carried out.

This research has been carried out in public primary and secondary schools of the Ministry of Education. Researches can be carried out at the level of high school and universities in terms of learning what kind of subjects are lying beneath with regard to importance of every level of education. It is recommended to carry out researches in private schools with aim to contribute to education since this research was carried out in public schools only.

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