



## **Educational Administrators' Views on their Awareness about Educational Planning**

### **Opiniones de los administradores educativos sobre su conciencia sobre la planificación educativa**

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#### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to determine administrators' views on their awareness of educational planning, purpose, benefits and problems they encounter with it. It was also aimed to find out if the administrators received education and training in educational planning. The research employed a qualitative phenomenological research design. The participants were 15 administrators who were determined with a maximum diversity method. The data were gathered with semi-structured interview technique and analyzed with descriptive analysis approach. Results revealed that most administrators received in-service training or education in educational planning, underlined numerous benefits, and they are aware of the importance of it. It was also discovered that although some administrators encounter problems, they consider educational planning as an important tool to achieve organizational goals.

**Keywords:** Education administrators; educational planning; management process; planning approach

#### **Abstract**

El propósito de esta investigación fue determinar las opiniones de los administradores sobre su conocimiento de la planificación educativa, el propósito, los beneficios y los problemas que enfrentan. También tenía como objetivo averiguar si los administradores recibieron educación y capacitación en planificación educativa. La investigación empleó un diseño de investigación fenomenológica cualitativa. Los participantes fueron 15 administradores que fueron determinados con un método de máxima diversidad. Los datos se recopilaron con una técnica de entrevista semiestructurada y se analizaron con un enfoque de análisis descriptivo. Los

resultados revelaron que la mayoría de los administradores recibieron capacitación en el servicio o educación en planificación educativa, subrayaron numerosos beneficios y son conscientes de la importancia de la misma. También se descubrió que, aunque algunos administradores encuentran problemas, consideran que la planificación educativa es una herramienta importante para lograr los objetivos de la organización.

**Palabras clave:** Administradores de educación; planificación educativa; proceso de gestión; enfoque de planificación

### **Introduction**

Education can be defined as a process that enables the development of all aspects of the individual and the desired behavior change. In this case, Ünal (1996) defines education as a process that provides knowledge, skills and other characteristics individuals and the society need. Besides, it is considered that education has a critical role in economic development of a country. In this regard, a great deal of theoreticians underline a direct relationship between education and economic development. Among them, T. R. Malthus, A. Smith and D. Ricardo conducted studies showing the contribution of education to economic development. For example, as manpower that provides economic and social development is trained and educated through education, according to Malthus, the better education individuals get, the higher the society gets.

Researches conducted on the relationship between economic development and education conclude that knowledge, skills and attitudes gained through education may increase the income level of both the country and individuals (Büyükaslan, 1995; Erdoğan, 2001; Günkör, 2017; Taş & Yenilmez, 2008). Also Karakütük (2016) notes that the behaviors acquired through education increase productivity in the economy. For this reason, Serin (1979) claims that education is a great external saving expenditure and generously entitled to public support. Therefore, this makes planning an important process.

### ***Planning***

As an important management process, planning is defined in various ways by many authors. According to Mintzberg (1981) planning means working out in broad outline things that need to be done considering the future, and methods for doing them to accomplish the purposes of an organization. Similarly, Karakütük (2017) defined planning as a design and action that will take an organization from a current point to the desired point. Adem (1997) also defined planning as a balanced distribution of scarce resources. Bursalıoğlu (2002) puts that it is a mental process that predicts thinking before practice and also a rational approach to

predetermined goals and the preparation stage for their realization. It reduces or eliminates all future instability, focuses attention on goals, leads to economic business and facilitates control.

Planning decisions have considerable impacts on any systems. These influences may remain for many decades, and many of these decisions are irreversible. In order to gain a better understanding of these long-standing impacts, planners require a systematic approach to evaluate the planning policy instruments utilized (Shahab, Clinch & O'Neill, 2019). In this sense, good planning can help administrators make well-directed decisions, interpret conditions correctly, and provide a realistic evaluation among existing options.

After observing its contribution to economy in developed countries, both underdeveloped and developing countries adopted planning to their management processes and in 1950s and 1960s, planning was considered as a necessary tool for economic and social development of these nations (Benveniste, 2007). Turkey is one of these countries that started to prepare development plans in 1960s. Although planning studies started in the 1930s in Turkey, it was made compulsory with the 1961 Constitutional Law. At first, the plans did not include social goals till 1960, but then economic and social problems were added into the plans legally (Karakütük, 2001). In the development plans, the impact of education on public property and economic development is emphasized more. For this reason, educational planning started to find place in these plans more often.

### ***Education Planning***

Educational planning can be defined as a primary instrument that helps students and societies to achieve their goals. In the broadest sense, educational planning is the implementation of a rational and regular analysis technique to the education process in order to make education more effective and efficient in meeting the needs of students and the society to achieve their goals (Coombs, 1973). To Kavak (1992), educational planning is an innovation and decision making process and resource allocation mechanism in an educational system. Also, Adem (2008) defined educational planning as an action that aims to explore the future or various options organizations have in order to realize their goals. It draws attention to certain problems and provides solutions to existing or probable problems that may arise in the future.

According to Hesapcıoğlu (1984), educational planning is a short, medium and long-term prediction of future in accordance with social, economic and political objectives, rational analysis of the educational organization as a system, determination of basic facts about the quantity and quality of the educational process. Özdem (2003) claims that the use of scientific methods is essential for educational planning for eliminating the tension caused by sharing

scarce resources. Adem (2008) underlined that educational planning should cover enrollments, drop-outs, graduates, teachers, supervisors, classrooms, laboratories, workshops and teaching materials predictions. It also includes educational objectives, contents, teaching methods, preparation of observations, training teaching staff, teacher-student ratios, supervisor-teacher relationships, guidance, research, providing textbooks and other teaching materials.

Moreover, Adem (2008) puts that educational administrators should deal with educational planning regarding national, regional, local level management issues, supervising schools, staff issues, managerial structure and methods, educational costs (unit cost per student, investment cost for one student additional capacity, unit cost per teacher, unit per graduate, cost) and their distribution among national, regional, local authorities. With educational planning, a road map can be drawn to ensure a balanced distribution of these resources and provide manpower for a country (Altundemir, 2012).

### ***Education planning in Turkey***

There are several institutions which are responsible for education planning in Turkey. It is primarily implemented by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Küçüker (2010) underlines that within the framework, education has taken its place in the development plans as a sector. Ergen (2013) emphasized that main tools traditionally used in educational planning in Turkey are 5-year development plans, annual programs, government programs and central government budget plans.

Within the development plans, educational planning predictions have focused on the provision of the resources required to fulfill the tasks required by economic and social development. These documents revealed procedures for the distribution of the provided resources among different types and levels of school. However, it is a question of matter whether educational administrators are aware of planning.

### **Purpose of the research**

According to Coombs (1973); education planning is the application of the rational and regular analysis technique to the educational process in order to make education more effective and efficient in meeting the needs of students and society and realizing its goals. This shows that educational planning is one of the vital tools for educational management teams. However, it is a matter of discussion whether educational administrators are aware of educational planning and know the purpose and benefits of it. It is also important to know if educational administrators encounter any problems with educational planning while managing their

institutions. For this reason, the main purpose of this research was to determine education administrators' views on their awareness of educational planning, purpose, benefits and problems they encounter with it. It was also aimed to find out if the administrators received education and training in educational planning.

### **Method**

The current research employed a phenomenological research design which is a part of a qualitative research method. These kinds of phenomenological researches collect data from individuals who have some experience about a certain subject. According to Creswell (2017) these methods have strong philosophical backgrounds. In such researches, individuals have both subjective and objective experiences about a subject or others. Phenomenological researches evaluate daily lives and see them as a sources of information, enable others to learn themselves, and allow people to analyze how an event develops in everyday life. These researches also help researches to gain basic perspectives for evaluating events (Morrisey & Higgs, 2006). Moreover, these kinds of researches search for answers to how individuals experience a situation (Van Manen, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, phenomenological researches borrow individuals' experiences to define and interpret them (Jasper, 1994; Miller, 2003).

### ***Study Group***

The participants of the current research consisted of 15 educational administrators determined by using criteria sampling technique. Creswell (2017) recommends that if the number of individuals experiencing the phenomenon is very high, it is easier to select the participants by using criteria sampling technique. In phenomenological researches, the number of participants is important in the selection of participants. For this reason, 15 educational administrators who are working in provincial and district national education directorates were selected with criterion sampling method. The number of participants may vary depending on the phenomenon studied and Creswell (2017) states that the size of the group can vary between 3 and 15 people.

### ***Data collection and analysis***

The data of this study were collected with a semi structured interview technique, which allows to obtain in-depth interviews. In-depth interview is defined as a qualitative interview technique that can be developed with a specific list of questions. These questions aims to get

insights of the participant's story. Semi-structured interviews include both specific and open-ended questions (Merriam, 2009). In this method, the participants can explain their opinions freely around particular topics. For gathering the data, first of all, in an e-mail, a lot of administrators were informed about the purpose of the study, and they were asked if they wanted to take part in this research voluntarily or not. In this respect, 15 administrators responded the e-mail and stated that they volunteered in participating in the research. Secondly, the participant administrators were consented after being assured of the confidentiality of the data to be gathered from them. They were promised that their identities would be kept in secret and their names would not be mentioned in any part of the study or shared with anyone else. Thirdly, an interview was planned on an agreed-upon day, and they were visited on that date. The interviews were both recorded and noted with their permission and each took approximately 30-40 minutes.

The gathered data were analyzed with the content analysis technique. According to Mayring (2000) and Patton (2014) this kind of data analysis usually aims to analyze similar data on a particular subject and comment on it. This analysis was implemented in some steps. First, the data were organized by revisiting each interviewer and listening to each recorded audiotape to provide the accuracy of the data. Each administrator's interview transcript was later analyzed according to the data analysis procedures. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) underlines that these kinds of procedures include development of coding categories, mechanical sorting of the data, and analysis of the data within each coding category. In this respect, each administrator's interview was coded separately. Here, emerging themes and repeated themes were grouped into coding categories in three steps as category definition, exemplification, and codification regulation. In this regard, the responds to each question were separated into meaningful categories, named, and coded. Then, the conceptualized statements were gathered. At this stage, it was aimed to avoid from repetition. Finally, the defined results were described and related to each other. It was also targeted to establish a cause-effect relationship among the existing parts. The administrators' opinions were coded as A1, A2, A3, and A4.

The constant comparative approach was employed while organizing the data and data analysis process. This approach results in the saturation of categories and the emergence of theory, which may emerge through continual analysis and doubling back for more data collection and coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Glaser, 1992). By implementing this method, each set of obtained data were re-examined concerning key subjects, recurrent events, or activities. Each respondent's data were reanalyzed various times for confirming and contradicting statements until the data were organized into satisfactory categories and sub-

codes to address the research question. For fulfilling the aforementioned purpose, primarily the following semi-structured questions were raised:

- What is planning?
- What is educational planning?
- Have you ever received any training in educational planning?
- In your opinion, what are the problems with educational planning?
- What are benefits of education planning?

### **Results**

The main purpose of the current research was to determine education administrators’ views on their awareness of educational planning, purpose, benefits and problems they encounter with it. It was also aimed to find out if the administrators received education and training in educational planning. In this regard, some results were obtained. In this part, these results are presented below each main theme.

#### ***Participants’ Awareness of Planning as a Management Process***

Below this theme, the education administrators’ awareness about planning as a management process are presented.

**Table 1**  
**Administrators’ Views on Planning**

<i>Main theme</i>	<i>Sub Themes</i>	<i>Participant Code</i>
<b>Planning</b>	Making a balanced distribution of educational resources	A11, A15, A9, A10
	Road map	A1, A4, A5
	Solving problems that may arise	A2, A12
	Using resources effectively	A7, A14
	A road map for achieving goals	A8
	Guiding while making decisions	A6
	Determination of the situation	A13
	Path to destination	A3

As shown in Table 1, while some participant administrators consider planning as making a balanced distribution of resources, three of them think it as a road map. Also, some participants consider that planning helps administrators solve problems that may arise while managing. Moreover, two administrators recognize it as using resources effectively. Finally, a participant sees it as a path to destination and guide while making decisions. In this regard, an administrator said, *“Without planning, administrators cannot find their way, and there may occur chaos in organization. In order to be efficient, planning is essential, but administrators do not have this knowledge at all (A4).”* Another administrator mentioned, *“It guides our management activities. If we have plans, our management tasks become smoother, and the risk is minimized. In this case, organizations can be efficient. But in practice, as we have poor knowledge about planning, things do not go well (A5).”*

In general, it can be said that most administrators are aware of the importance of planning, but they also believe that they have poor knowledge about planning. Their opinions generally focus on efficiency and allocating resources in a balanced way. Both things are very crucial for realizing purposes of an organization. If an organization is not efficient, it can lead to entropy and as a result the facilities can end. Similarly, if scarce resources are not allocated in a balanced way, there may occur many problems ranging from conflicts among people and units to waste of time and energy.

***Participants’ Views on the Purpose of Educational Planning***

Below this theme, the participants’ views on the purpose of educational planning are given.

**Table.2  
Administrators’ Views on Education Planning**

<i>Main theme</i>	<i>Sub Themes</i>	<i>Participant Code</i>
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Educational planning	To achieve the goals determined in education	A5,12, A15, A8
	Ensuring the planned operation of schools in the region	A9, A4, A14
	Determining where to reach from the current position in education	A3, A13
	Acting in accordance with the plans provided by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE)	A7, A11
	Supervision of the distribution of teachers and the functioning of education	A2, A1
	Facilitate equal distribution of training services	A6, A10

As seen in Table 2, while some participants consider education planning as achieving the goals determined in education, some others accept it as ensuring the planned operation of schools in the region. In addition, some other administrators think that education planning aims to determine where to reach from the current position in education. In this regard, an administrator underlined, “We make some decisions to achieve our goals. First, we predict about the number of students to be graduated, new-comers, classroom needs, teaching staff needs before the term starts (A15)”. Another administrator states, “We plan operations first. In this frame, we form a team to carry out these plans. This team makes a detailed plan of the region, obtains data, and determines the resources like human and other resources by analyzing expectations from teachers, students and parents. Then, academic plans are released (A4)”. A principal claimed, “We determine where to reach at the plans provided by MoNE first. Then, we make our preparations for these goals (A11).”

Overall, it can be said that administrators evaluate educational planning as an important tool to achieve goals. It can be evaluated that the main purpose of educational plans according to administrators is about goals, how to achieve them, and what operations to be conducted and act accordingly.

### ***Participants’ Views on Their Training Experience on Educational Planning***

Below this theme, it was researched if educational administrators have received any education or training on educational planning. Here, their responses are presented.

**Table 3**  
**Administrators’ Views on Planning Training**

<i>Main theme</i>	<i>Sub Themes</i>	<i>Participant Code</i>
Training in educational planning	in-service training	A12, A15, A7, A10
	graduate education	A4, A5, A11
	not received any training	A3, A1, A6
	have enough information	A13, A2
	have no information	A14

As can be seen in Table 3, 8 administrators received planning training. While some of them received it at in-service trainings, some others took this training during their postgraduate studies. However, 6 administrators have not received such training in any way. Especially, it is unfortunate that the administrators with 1 and 5 years administrative experience had no special training or education about educational planning at all. An administrator noted, “I received educational planning training at an in-service training and it helped me a lot to make better plans. After that training I started to make plans according to scientific planning principles (A6).” Another administrator said, “I had masters’ degree in educational management and had courses about educational planning there. It helped me understand the management process better (A5.” On the other hand, a young administrator said, “I had no education or training about educational planning and I have made a lot of mistakes. I understand that I need to receive such an education as soon as possible (A13).”

It can be inferred that experienced administrators had a chance to participate in in-service training, and benefitted it very much. Similarly, some administrators attended to a postgraduate program and learned educational planning there. However, there are those who have not received such training and they are in the need of participating such a training.

***Administrators’ Views on the Problems Encountered in Education Planning***

Below this theme, the administrators’ opinions regarding the problems they encounter with educational planning are presented.

**Table 4**  
**The Participants’ Views on the Problems Encountered in Education Planning**

<i>Main theme</i>	<i>Sub Themes</i>	<i>Participant Code</i>
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The problems encountered	No prior preparations done before planning.	A12, A7
	Generally conducted as a legal requirement.	A5, A4
	Prepared by senior administrators instead of planning experts.	A2, A8
	Future predictions are not made properly.	A11
	Difficult to find people to do the educational research.	A1
	Administrators don't have knowledge of educational planning.	A9
	Lack of coordination among schools	A3
	The goals are not clear	A13
Central planning ignoring regional differences even within the city.	A10	

As can be seen in Table 4, administrators encounter several problems while administering their schools. They consider that no prior preparations are made and plans are prepared by senior administrators who are not familiar with education planning. In this regard, an administrator uttered, "The administrators from the ministry prepare plans and unfortunately they are not experts in educational planning. Therefore, there occurs a lot of revisions while implementing these plans (A2)." Another administrator stated, "It can be understood from the examples and results that planning is not taken seriously. For example, even classroom size cannot be predicted correctly (A6)." Some administrators said, "I don't think that educational planning is carried out in the way it should be. Unfortunately, educational plans are prepared as a paper work to be added on checklist (A12/A7)." Another administrator expressed, "If there were planning in the field of education, there would not be too many teacher candidates who are waiting to be appointed to their posts. Turkey needs approximately 140.000 teachers but there are more than 400.000 teacher candidates (A9)."

It can be said that administrators face a lot of challenges with educational planning. It is claimed that education plans are not prepared effectively from the basic education to higher education. Educational plans usually prepared as paper work.

### ***Administrators' views on the problems encountered in education planning***

Below this theme, educational administrators' views on benefits of educational planning are presented.

**Table 5**  
**Administrators' Views on the Benefits of Education Planning**

<i>Main theme</i>	<i>Sub Themes</i>	<i>Participant Code</i>
Benefits of education planning	Provide effective use of scarce resources.	A2, A4
	Help building needed physical infrastructure	A3, A5
	Distribute and use human resources effectively.	A6, A8
	Prevent waste of resources	A7, A12
	Provide service equality	A1, A9,
	Clarify future goals	A10, A14
	Saves time	A11, A15

As displayed in Table 5, the participant administrators list a lot of benefits of educational planning. They consider that educational planning provides effective use of scarce resources, helps build needed infrastructures, distributes human resources effectively, and prevents waste of resources and service equality. It is considered that educational planning also clarifies goals and saves time. In this frame, two administrators responded, “We can use human and other resources better. Otherwise, there may be inequalities among institutions. Therefore, it prevents unnecessary expenditure and waste of resources (A2/A12).” Two administrators said, “Planning has a lot of benefits. For example, it helps building physical infrastructure according to student needs. By doing so, resources are distributed equally (A3/A9).” Another administrator noted, “By making educational plans, it is possible to save time (A15).” Two administrators also claimed, “Planning in education clarifies future goals and it is time saving as well (A10/A14).”

All in all, all participant administrators of this sample defended the benefits of educational planning for both institutions and individuals. As can be understood from their opinions, administrators believe that planning in education can save resources, time and energy and brings productivity in the end.

## Discussion

This study purposed to determine education administrators' views on their awareness of planning, and purpose of educational planning, problems they encounter with planning, their education and training experience about planning, and benefits of educational planning and in this regard a number of results were obtained.

One of the results reached though this study showed that administrators of this sample are aware of the importance of planning and their opinions generally focus on efficiency and allocating resources in a balanced way. It is considered that planning is clearly an essential management function in all schools, regardless of geographic location or grade levels served (Beach & Lindahl, 2000). Educational planning can help schools perform beyond the focus of a planning and cultivate the potential of all members of the organization to fulfil their roles (Hess, Johnson, & Reynolds, 2014; Wedell, 2009). However, administrators of this sample also aware of the fact that some administrative have poor knowledge about planning, and it affects their administrative tasks in a negative way. The issues expressed by the administrators may be a result of poor planning education and training. It can be interpreted that administrators are not tested or interviewed according to their planning knowledge or experience. It could be a solution to this problem to establish proper strategies and choose candidates among those who have education or training in planning. In this case, they can make school facilities more effective (Tanner & Lackney, 2006). In addition, as investment on education and its planning contributes to better student achievement and economic growth, planning knowledge and experience should be a must for administrator candidates (Chau, 2003; Mau, 1995; Woodhall, Hernes & Beeby, 2004).

According to another result, administrators of this sample evaluate educational planning as an important tool to achieve organizational goals. They believe that educational plans purpose to realize the goals determined by the central government and meet individual needs. It also aims to ensure planned operations of schools. It is asserted that operation plans should be in consistent with the general plans provided by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Since educational plans also provide equal distribution of resources, educational plans are considered crucial for educational institutions.

A further result revealed that administrators encounter a lot of problems regarding educational planning. In this sense, first of all, the participants believe that most administrators who prepare educational plans are not qualified and expert in educational planning. Planning is a special field and requires expertise and those who prepare educational plans should have expertise or education in the field of planning and educational planning. According to

Babaoglan (2015) planning is considered as a legal requirement and managerial practice rather than planning application to solve the school problems; moreover, education administrators do not believe in the importance of planning process, because they are not tightly implemented. In his study, Bayram (2009) reached a similar result. He found that administrators do not believe in the viability plans (Chang, 2008; and Stevenson, 2006).

Also, it was discovered that most administrators of this sample have received in-service training or education on educational planning. In this regard, some administrators received postgraduate education in educational administration and they received planning courses there. Since they have knowledge about planning, it was found that they manage their schools better and they face fewer problems. It can be commented that they have mastered the concept of educational planning during their education there. However, seven administrators have no or little information about planning, which is a problem. In fact, as Earthman (2009) stated school administrators should know how they can plan educational facilities. The problem can be solved when education administrators are chosen among those who received education in the field of education administration or attended to an in-service training in planning. In addition, inexperienced administrators can be encouraged to participate in in-service trainings about educational planning. However, educational planning in Turkey is very cumbersome and never lets administrators have their own budget and prepare development plans (Lo, 2010; Psacharopoulos, 1995).

Regarding the benefits of educational planning, educational administrators of this sample emphasized the importance and listed numerous benefits of it. The participants stated that educational plans saves especially resources, time and energy and brings productivity in the end. Moreover, it has rational and economic benefits such as setting achievable targets and realizing them, ensuring educational work done.

### **Conclusion**

As a result of the results obtained through this research, it can be concluded that although some administrators have poor knowledge about planning, they are aware the importance of planning. In addition, educational administrators, underlined numerous benefits of planning, which makes their administrative tasks work more smoothly. On the other hand, as some administrators have not received any training on educational planning, they encounter some problems while they are administrering their schools.

Therefore, by evaluating the conclusions in general, some implications can be made for decision-makers, practitioners and also future researchers.

- Administrators should be chosen among those who have education in educational administration.
- Administrators' professional development initiatives concerning planning should be encouraged.
- Educational plans should be prepared by planning experts and implemented strictly.
- Through a mixed-method study, qualitative and quantitative results can be compared.
- A study can be conducted in some other countries which show similar features regarding management and economic situations.

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