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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Examining School Principals' and Their Deputies' Beliefs Toward School Management

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Abstract

Professional beliefs, as cognitive structures based on the meaning of the decisions and practices within the professional organization, are significant in the perspective of school management and administration, unifying those who carry out this task and creating standards. In this context, the research aims to examine the beliefs of school principals and their deputies toward school management. The phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research designs, was used to explore the phenomenon of school principals' and their deputies' beliefs toward school management. The participants of the research consisted of school principals and deputy principals. Semi-structured interviews and memory forms were used to collect the data for the research. The data of the research were analyzed by content analysis. According to the findings, among the beliefs of school principals and their deputies regarding the qualities of the managerial task, "social-oriented beliefs" they emphasized the most. On the one hand, school principals and their deputies mostly had the view of "professional inadequacy beliefs" regarding their beliefs about their professional competence, on the other hand, they emphasized the theme of "entry to duty-oriented beliefs" regarding their beliefs about the professionalization process. In the narratives of school administrators, the theme of "self-efficacy beliefs on management" was emphasized in their beliefs about school management. Based on the findings about the beliefs of school principals and their deputies toward school management, it can be suggested that school management be defined as a profession, and the areas where they feel inadequate should be developed.

Keywords: Professional beliefs, professionalization, school management, school principals, task of management

Introduction

Although school administration is acknowledged as a profession requiring expertise worldwide, it is assigned as a secondary duty in Türkiye. The prevailing belief in the educational system that "teaching is the primary profession" has led to the neglect of scientific knowledge in educational management during the selection of school administrators, resulting in school management being perceived as a field practiced through trial and error (Akbaşlı & Balıkçı, 2013; Akçadağ, 2014). However, administrators without the necessary competence and qualifications decrease effectiveness and success in educational organizations (Arabacı et al., 2015). In countries where school administration is regarded as an area of expertise, individuals working in this field receive specialized training through dedicated programs (Şişman, 2010), which leads to schools successfully achieving their objectives. In Türkiye, the quality of school administration remains a topic of debate due to various factors affecting the professionalization of school administration, including specialization and professional development (Erol, 2020). In this context, the 19th National Education Council Decisions (2014) and the 20th National Education Council Decisions (2021) have addressed issues such as emphasizing specialization in school administration, depoliticizing the structure and operation of school administration, diversifying administrators' authority, and clearly defining their responsibilities in conjunction with that authority (Özdemir, 2019). Nevertheless, the challenges concerning the recognition of school administration as an area of expertise persist, and these issues continue to shape the perspectives and beliefs of both school administrators and prospective administrators on school administration (Karakuş, 2012; Turan & Şişman, 2000; Yılmaz, 2019).

In organizational life, beliefs are perceptions based on the appearance of certain things as "right or wrong" (Karakuş, 2012). Sigel (1985) defines belief as mental structures formed based on experience, accepted as true by the individual, and guiding the individual's behaviors; similarly, Harvey (1986) defines beliefs as individual representations related to reality, possessing accuracy that can guide the individual's thoughts and actions (cited in Karakuş, 2012). The concept of belief can be used interchangeably with judgment, action, idea, ideology, conceptual system, implicit theory, internal mental processes, practice principles, and perspective (Pajares, 1992). Some argue that beliefs are subconscious assumptions and intrinsic meanings, while others contend they are mental models and representations (Ertmer, 2005). Professional beliefs are cognitive structures that individuals create to systematically examine and understand decisions and practices within their professional organizations (Bayrak Özmutlu, 2018). Professional beliefs form the basis for understanding situations and events encountered during the professional development process (Chong & Low, 2009). Various sources shape professional beliefs (such as education, personality traits, upbringing style, and socioeconomic characteristics of the region where schools are located). These sources of professional beliefs can be classified as situational, individual, social, experiential, and theoretical (Elbaz, 2018). On the other hand, Levin and He (2009) examine belief sources under the categories of family, experience, and education. Experience and education categories include learning experiences, reading, lessons, and

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workshops. Mansour (2009) classifies sources of professional beliefs as formal and informal. The formal source type is offered through formal education, while the informal source type corresponds to units outside of formal education.

Upon examining the beliefs of school administrators concerning school administration, it is evident that they have developed a set of beliefs tailored to their needs when carrying out educational activities, in addition to adhering to laws and regulations. Among these beliefs are the notions that school administration is a temporary duty, any teacher can fulfill this role, and the work involved in school administration is perceived negatively. Graduate-educated school administrators have been found to doubt their expertise while simultaneously believing that talent is innate and fixed (Biçer & Özgenel, 2020). They tend not to prioritize innovative approaches in schools and possess low beliefs in their ability to measure project effectiveness. They often overlook the need for change in schools and consider their relationships with teachers to be of primary importance (Larsen & Huter, 2014). Furthermore, they hold high beliefs in bureaucratic or democratic management styles (Karakuş, 2012). According to Fırat (2006), changes in legal texts also influence the beliefs and attitudes of school administrators. It can be argued that the main factors contributing to the sources of professional beliefs about school administration are the disregard for professionalization standards and expertise in educational management during the selection and appointment of administrators. Consequently, school administrators tend to develop political attitudes, reducing their interest in management expertise and training. This leads to school administrators not perceiving management as an area of expertise, not valuing graduate and preservice training, and even pursuing politicians through unethical means. Another issue is the limited authority of school administrators, resulting in conflicts between authority and responsibility, preventing them from fulfilling expected roles and causing stagnation (Özdayı, 2001). In this regard, school administrators may perceive themselves as passive in the management process, questioning their existential reasons and hindering the achievement of their objectives. Therefore, there is a need to change the factors that cause the formation of negative professional beliefs among school administrators.

Education administration is defined as the effective operation, development, and renewal process of the educational organization established to meet the educational needs of society to achieve predetermined objectives (Ömeroğlu, 2006:17). Considering education's function of providing a universal quality to society, shaping school administration within the context of new meanings attributed to schools in this era would be more effective. School administration involves the effective use of the school's human and material resources to achieve the school's objectives (Özdemir, 2019). According to Altunay and Aksu (2019), a school administrator should be able to develop a vision in line with the school's educational policy and convey this vision to all personnel working in the school. Yıldırım & Alp (2017) listed characteristics such as "being competent, having a good knowledge of regulations, possessing representation skills, and being able to communicate effectively" as elements of being a school administrator. However, research (Arabacı et al., 2015; Cemaloğlu, 2005; Fırat, 2006) suggests that current conditions have led to the perception of school administration as a field representing political preferences and bureaucratic work.

In Türkiye, the selection of school administrators has followed the apprenticeship model, the educational sciences model, and the examination model, based on the requirement of having served as a teacher for a certain period, in accordance with the Ministry of National Education's administrative appointment regulations (Şişman & Turan, 2002). This situation has led to the emergence of a teacher–administrator type, causing the same individual to play roles required by two different value systems, leading to role conflicts and the weakening of the administrator's power when these roles are contradictory (Bursalıoğlu, 2003). Consequently, due to the different competencies required by the teaching and school administration professions, the reflection of education administration knowledge in the field is diminished (Akçadağ, 2014; Şişman & Turan, 2002). In this sense, the absence of a sensitive administrator selection for the field of education administration can negatively shape the perspectives of appointed school administrators toward their profession. In their research, Arabacı et al. (2015: p. 183) pointed out problems such as the biased training and appointment method, the politicization of education, the lack of innovation, and the challenges caused by inexperience. In conclusion, despite the accumulated knowledge, a discontinuous and unclear administrator appointment and selection system in the field of school administration continues to be implemented. This may contribute to the reinforcement of negative beliefs about school administration held by school administrators, as representatives of the field in which quality is not important.

In line with the training of school administrators with scientific principles in their field, there is a need for an understanding of "expertise is the main thing in the profession" instead of "teaching is the main thing in the profession." In this direction, school administration should be accepted as a profession (Yılmaz, 2019). Starting from classical management theories and including postmodern management theories, all educational management theories emphasize scientific knowledge, the importance of professional specialization, and competence. The ability of school administrators to fulfill their reason for being at school depends on structuring management knowledge and developing managerial values and beliefs. Therefore, school administrators should be trained with scientific knowledge, and negative professional values and beliefs should be changed instead of vague criteria. According to Bolman and Deal's (Tanrıöğen et al., 2014) four-frame theory, the current laws in Türkiye prevent school administrators from being regarded as scientific experts; there are inadequacies in the laws related to the appointment and training process. In the human resources framework, it is necessary to look at school administrators' qualifications rather than teachers' qualifications in selecting personnel who will become administrators. From a political point of view, it can be said that removing the rigid hierarchy between central and provincial administration can improve the quality of school administration. On the other hand, according to Weick's (Miles, 2006) signification theory, the events that take place in the school are given meaning by communicating with other members of the organization. When the classifications and patterns obtained from past experiences are combined with new data, meanings are created. In this respect, in order to make sense of job and task descriptions in school administration and practices that classify school behaviors within a professional framework, school administrators need training that includes specialization and leadership. However, models predicated on prior managerial experiences can potentially intensify negative beliefs. As per the institutional theory, all organizations, over time, tend to converge toward uniformity in appearance and behavior, thus diverging from desired levels of efficacy and efficiency in their structures and processes. According to Oliver (1997, as cited in Miles (2016), managers do not attach sufficient importance to organizational activities, and there is a conspicuous lack of scrutiny regarding the reasons for their initiation or the necessity of their continuation. Individuals with high status may deviate from the norm, while those of lower status may resort to whatever means necessary for survival, irrespective of their legitimacy (Phillips & Zuckerman, 2001, as cited in Miles, 2016). Similarly, the neglect of professionalization standards and the expertise in educational management during the selection and appointment of executives, in conjunction with an insufficient emphasis on vocational competence, engenders negative beliefs concerning professionalization in school administration. However, vocational competence, defined as the "knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes needed to fulfill duties and responsibilities" (Ak et al., 2016,

p. 92), is integral for the professionalization in school management. Thus, studies that take into account the professional beliefs of school administrators and proffer solutions for enhancement are of paramount importance, as they aid in mitigating factors that could undermine the effectiveness of schools.

In the previous literature, several studies examine the professionalization of school administration (Akbaşlı & Balıkçı, 2013; Yılmaz, 2019), the current situation regarding the appointment and training of school administrators (Aktepe, 2014; Arabacı et al., 2015; Erol, 2020), and the problems related to educational management and administrators (Akçadağ, 2014; Cemaloğlu, 2005; Ömeroğlu, 2006; Takmak, 2019). However, no study has been found concerning the beliefs of school administrators about school management in Türkiye. Investigating the beliefs of school administrators about school management is considered necessary, as it may provide guiding information on the variables that contribute to professional beliefs, changes in negative professional beliefs, and ways to address them. This research aims to examine and understand school administrators' beliefs concerning school management in Türkiye. In this context, the research problems are as follows:

1. What are the experiences of school administrators regarding the beliefs developed about the nature of the school management role?
2. How do school administrators define their individual professional competence beliefs?
3. What are the beliefs of school administrators concerning the professionalization process of school management?
4. How do school administrators describe their beliefs about school administration in their memories?

Method

Research Model

The research design employed in this study is a phenomenological approach, which aims to bring forward the perceptions and experiences of individuals from their own perspectives (Lester, 1999). In other words, phenomenological research aims to define, understand, and interpret the structure of phenomena that occur in consciousness as a result of the interaction of the individual with the world (Bloor & Wood, 2006). In the phenomenological design, questions are explored regarding the perceptions/experiences related to the phenomenon and the circumstances and environments in which these experiences occur (Cresswell, 2021). In this context, the study aimed to identify the meanings and reasons that school administrators attribute to the phenomenon of professional beliefs based on their experiences. The phenomenological process was conducted by engaging with mental images representing the experience and attempting to "approach the experience."

Participants

The population consists of 627 school administrators working in schools located in the Bayraklı, Bornova, Buca, Çiğli, Gaziemir, Karabağlar, Karşıyaka, and Konak districts of İzmir province. From this population, 30 school administrators were selected to form the participants. Purposeful sampling with maximum variation was employed for selecting the participants. Maximum variation sampling aims to determine whether there are any common or shared phenomena among situations exhibiting diversity and to examine the different dimensions of the problem according to this diversity (Schreier & Flick, 2014). To ensure maximum diversity in the sample, the selected participants consisted of school administrators (principals and deputy principals) from three levels of educational institutions (primary, middle, and high schools). In order to maintain confidentiality in the research, real names of the participating school principals and deputy principals were not used; instead, codes were used based on the level of education the administrators were responsible for (PS for primary, MS for middle, and HS for high school), as well as codes for principals (P) and deputy principals (DP), followed by a number. For example, PSP1 was used for a primary school principal, PSDP3 for a primary school deputy principal, MSP4 for a middle school principal, and HSP25 for a high school principal.

The distribution of the participants based on individual characteristics revealed that 8 participants were aged between 31 and 40, 19 were aged between 41 and 50, and 3 were aged 51 or older. In terms of gender, 20 participants were male, and 10 were female. Regarding education level, 18 participants had postgraduate degrees, and 12 had undergraduate degrees. Additionally, 7 participants had 1–5 years of administrative experience, 10 had 6–10 years, and 13 had 11–20 years.

Instruments

This research employed semi-structured interviews and narrative forms, as data collection tools. The semi-structured interview form is comprised of two sections containing open-ended questions, which align with personal information and sub-problems. Four questions were formulated to ascertain the school administrators' beliefs about the qualifications of their managerial duties, individual professional competence beliefs, beliefs about the professionalization process of school administration, and memories containing the school administrators' beliefs about school management. While preparing the questions, clarity and comprehensibility were prioritized. Upon drafting the interview form, the opinions of two experts in the field of Educational Administration at Ege University and Kütahya Dumlupınar University were sought, leading to a revision of the interview form based on expert recommendations. Subsequently, pilot interviews were conducted with three school administrators, and the interview form was finalized. Second, the narrative form, which systematically presents the administrators' professional beliefs in chronological order, was to scrutinize their experiences. Narratives constitute the essence of this technique through individuals' subjective interpretations and experiences about past or present events or situations (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018).

Validity and Reliability

The concept of validity is related to the consistency and credibility of the research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Credibility refers to the level at which the researcher's findings and conclusions reflect reality (Miller, 2000). Lincoln and Gubba (1985) suggest strategies such as in-depth, focused data collection, triangulation, expert review, long-term interaction, and participant confirmation to ensure credibility. In phenomenological research, indicators of credibility include the researcher's openness and sensitivity toward the phenomenon throughout the research process, the researcher's ability to set aside prior knowledge about the phenomenon (epoché), participant confirmation, and transferability (Moustakas, 1994). In determining the views on the professional beliefs of school administrators, efforts were made to minimize interviewer's influence and subjective judgments by asking questions in the same style and order to obtain objective answers. One of the ways to ensure credibility in a qualitative study is prolonged engagement. The researchers controlled their biases by being present in the study environment. During the data collection process, sufficient time was allocated to develop an in-depth understanding of the participants' views.

Another way to ensure the credibility of the research is through triangulation, which reveals different aspects, meanings, and sources related to the event or phenomenon (Creswell ve Miller, 2000). In this study, methodological triangulation was employed. First, semi-structured interviews were used with administrators, and then the narrative technique was applied to support the findings (Stake, 2010). Additionally, participant confirmation was ensured by asking questions for participants to review and approve their statements during and after the interview. Expert review was also utilized to ensure the reliability/

consistency of the research. Furthermore, efforts were made to ensure transferability by directly recording and documenting the administrators' expressions in the semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2021). Besides, consistency was considered during the thematization phase to bring different perspectives together around a common result and achieve harmony (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018).

Data Analysis

Content analysis technique was employed to analyze the interview data, wherein themes that explain the data were identified by discerning the concepts and relationships that could account for the information collected from the study documents (Sözer & Aydın, 2020). A three-step coding approach was employed that involved the segregation of data according to sub-problems, assigning codes to define subthemes, and selecting examples (Neuman, 2009) to analyze the data. In phenomenological data analysis, certain stages are necessary, such as identifying important statements, grouping common statements, thematizing meaning clusters, creating structural and textural descriptions, and combining these descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). Initially, the significant statements made by the administrators concerning the phenomenon of professional beliefs were identified while removing repetitive and irrelevant statements. Subsequently, all the common statements of the administrators were gathered and categorized into specific themes. Next, textural descriptions of the administrators' experiences and structural descriptions of how they experienced them were developed. Lastly, a common meaning formed by the structural and textural descriptions was uncovered.

After being separately coded by two researchers, the thematization was carried out collaboratively. The themes obtained through content analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows the themes developed based on the four research questions of the study. The data analysis of the school administrators' views on their beliefs regarding school management resulted in 11 themes.

Results

This section of the study presents the findings on school administrators' beliefs regarding school management based on sub-problems.

Beliefs of School Administrators About the Nature of Their Duties

The first sub-problem of the study is stated as "*What are the experiences of school administrators regarding the beliefs developed about the nature of the school management profession?*" The themes obtained from the data related to this sub-problem are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 illustrates the results of the data analysis on "*school administrators' beliefs about the nature of their duties*," which yielded three themes: *social-oriented beliefs*, *situation-precondition-oriented beliefs*, and *experience-oriented beliefs***.** The theme of "*social-oriented beliefs*" (*f* = 44) encompassed codes such as "*guidance* (*f* = 7), *communication* (*f* = 18), *democratic behaviour* (*f* = 8), *leadership skills* (*f* = 6), and *fairness* (*f* = 5)" regarding school administrators' beliefs about the nature of their duties. The code "communication" encompassed the belief that the fundamental qualities of school *management* include "establishing positive relationships with parents, teachers, and students, being sincere, effective listening, and persuasion." One school principal's view regarding the code "*communication*" is quoted as follows:

> "*As a school administrator, one should understand the teachers and have good communication with parents and teachers. By good communication, I don't just mean doing everything they say, but also using gestures and facial expressions well while solving problems. Firstly, they need to use all communication tools effectively.*" (PSP26)

The theme of "*social-oriented beliefs*" highlighted another notable code, "*democratic behaviour*" (*f* = 8), which encapsulates the administrators' views regarding the significance of promoting the participation of the majority of school members in school practices. In this context, a school deputy principal's perspective on the code "*democratic behaviour*" is quoted as follows:

> "*It is necessary to lead the school not with the idea of 'I know, my rules are valid,' but in a more democratic way, by involving both parents and students in the process. They should not be stubborn*." (MSDP14).

The second theme that emerged from the analysis of school administrators' beliefs about the nature of their duties is "*situation-preconditi on-oriented beliefs*." Through the analysis of the data, the theme of "*situation-precondition-oriented beliefs*" (*f* = 29) revealed four distinct codes: "*having expertise in the field* (*f* = 15), *developing standard behaviours* (*f* = 4), *defining teacher criteria* (*f* = 7), and *defining the profession* (*f* = 3)." The code "*having expertise in the field*" pertains to the belief that acquiring various forms of knowledge on management science, legislation, and practice is a prerequisite for effective school administration. One school principal's view regarding the code "*having expertise in the field*" is quoted as follows:

> "*Administrators need to focus on their work at the level they are assigned and have expertise in their field. In the role of a principal, our duties and responsibilities are more significant than other administrators. They need to have a passion, a sense of duty, and consciousness to undertake them. We must have a good command of laws and regulations and be knowledgeable about the legislation. When we think about parents and students, leadership is also a skill that requires good communication and persuasive abilities*." (HSP5)

Table 1.
Themes Arising from Data Analysis

Research Questions	Themes
What are the experiences of school administrators regarding the beliefs developed about the nature of the school management profession?	Social-oriented beliefs
	Situation-precondition-oriented beliefs
	Experience-oriented beliefs
How do school administrators define individual professional competence beliefs?	Beliefs regarding professional inadequacies
	Beliefs regarding professional competencies
What are the beliefs of school administrators regarding the professionalization process of school management?	Entry to duty-oriented beliefs
	Prerequisite-oriented beliefs
	Practice-oriented beliefs
	Unethical problems-oriented beliefs
How do school administrators define their beliefs regarding school management in their memories?	Beliefs about managerial areas
	Self-efficacy beliefs on management

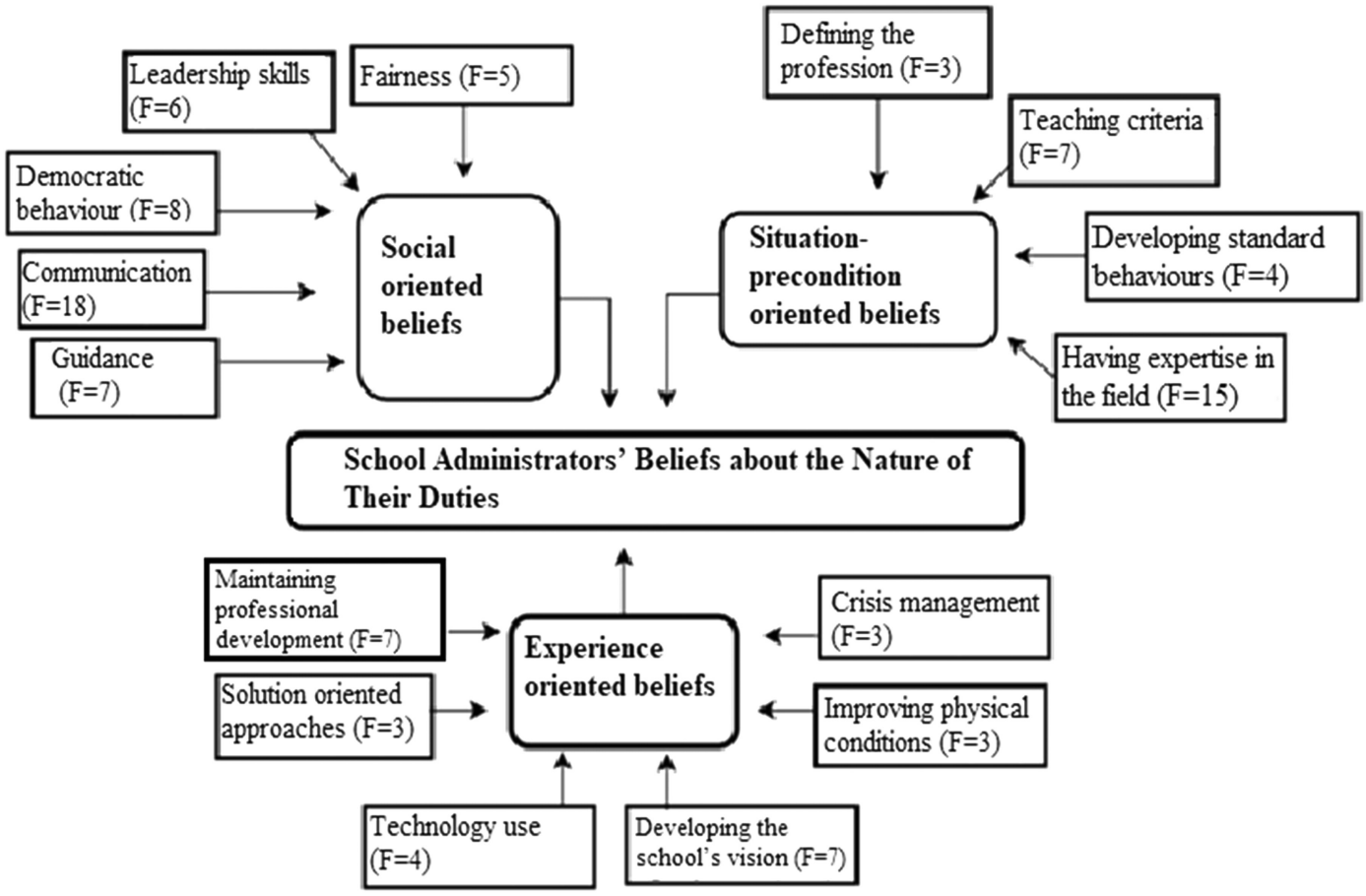

Figure 1.
School Administrators' Beliefs About the Nature of Their Duties.

Another code highlighted within the "*situation-precondition-oriented beliefs*" theme is "*defining teaching criteria*" (*f* = 7). This code reflects the belief among administrators that having prior teaching experience is a fundamental requirement for effective school leadership. In this context, a school principal's perspective on the code "*defining teaching criteria*" is quoted as follows:

> "*The person who will lead the school must be a teacher. They should have graduated from an education faculty. If a student is late to school, instead of punishing them, the school administrator should try to understand why they are late and find a solution. This is what teaching is all about. A child may be late for school because their parents didn't wake up on time. We cannot view the situation solely from the perspective of a company or a manager. Ultimately, we are shaping a human being here. We need to prioritise ethical values and spiritual considerations over materialism.*" (MSP2)

The third theme regarding school administrators' beliefs about the nature of their managerial duties is "*experience-oriented beliefs.*" As a result of the analysis, "*experience-oriented beliefs*" (*f* = 27) were identified, including "*maintaining professional development* (*f* = 7), *solution-oriented approaches* (*f* = 3), *technology use* (*f* = 4), *developing the school's vision* (*f* = 7), *improving physical conditions* (*f* = 3), *and crisis management* (*f* = 3)." Among these, the most emphasized codes were "*maintaining professional development*" and "*developing the school's vision*" (*f* = 7). The "*maintaining professional development*" code is based on implicit assumptions that managerial duties necessitate constantly updating oneself, and therefore, participation in activities that develop professional skills is essential. A school principal's opinion on the "*maintaining professional development*" code is as follows:

> *"School administration is a complete job, requiring expertise and self-improvement in various areas. Especially when we are school principals, the perception that we just sit at our desks and drink tea and coffee arises. For example, in a company, there is a personnel manager responsible for employees, a separate unit responsible for employee benefits, and a separate unit for strategy. However, all these aspects converge in one person in school administration, so multiple qualifications are required.*" (HSP30)

Another noteworthy code highlighted under the theme of "*experience-oriented beliefs*" is "*developing the school vision*" (*f* = 7), which pertains to the belief that administrators should set goals and develop strategies and methods to achieve them, in addition to the existing goals of the school. The code "*developing the school vision*" underscores the importance of creating a shared vision that aligns with the unique characteristics and objectives of the school. A school deputy principal's view regarding the code "*developing the school vision*" is quoted as follows:

> "*The school administrator must first understand the school's goals and objectives and manage accordingly. For instance, there are different types of schools with different objectives. The objectives of an Anatolian high school may differ from those of an Imam Hatip high school, depending on the school's characteristics. Secondly, the administrator should understand the needs of the teachers and staff at the school where they work. Thirdly, they should set a course of action based on the educational and instructional needs of the students.*" (HSDP29)

In conclusion, the theme of "*social-oriented beliefs*" can be seen to primarily encompass the interpersonal relationships associated with the "*administrative duties*" of school administrators. The theme of "*situation-precondition-oriented beliefs*" pertains to the prerequisites and qualifications deemed necessary for individuals to become school administrators, while the theme of "*experience-oriented beliefs*" centers on the skills and competencies that school administrators acquire through experience.

Beliefs of School Administrators Regarding Their Individual Professional Competence

The second sub-problem of this study pertains to "*How school administrators define their individual professional competence beliefs?*" The themes that emerged from the data collected regarding this sub-problem are presented in Figure 2.

Upon examining Figure 2, the data analysis regarding the "*beliefs of school administrators about their individual professional competence*" revealed two themes, namely, beliefs regarding professional inadequacy (*f* = 93) and beliefs regarding professional competence (*f* = 40). Within the theme of "*beliefs regarding professional competence,*" two sub-themes emerged, namely, "*situation-based beliefs*" (*f* = 15) and "*social-based beliefs*" (*f* = 25). Similarly, within the theme of "*beliefs regarding professional inadequacy*," two sub-themes emerged, namely, "*situation-based beliefs*" (*f* = 59) and "*social-based beliefs*" (*f* = 34).

Regarding the beliefs of school administrators about their individual professional competence, the theme of "*beliefs regarding professional inadequacy*" under the sub-theme of "*situation-based beliefs*" (*f* = 59) encompasses the codes "*financial management*" (*f* = 16), "*fulfilling duties*" (*f* = 24), and "*failing to ensure the school's improvement*" (*f* = 19). The code "*fulfilling duties*" refers to the beliefs of school administrators who face difficulties due to the multifaceted and limited nature of their duties, leading them to feel inadequate in fulfilling their responsibilities. Two quotes from school principals and deputy principals regarding the code "*fulfilling duties*" are as follows:

One school administrator stated, "*Guard duties, classes, student affairs, parent affairs, official correspondence in the district, sudden events at the school … Trying to control all of these at once makes things difficult. I have difficulty keeping up. If there is a situation in which we need to take care of a student at the school, we leave paperwork aside. These things cause problems in the work process*." (PSDP24)

Another administrator mentioned, "*You don't have decision-making power in the school, but you need to take action. You make a decision, but you don't have the authority. However, you are responsible when there is a problem. A teacher asks, 'Can I not come today?' I don't have the authority to give permission. The District National Education Directorate is responsible for that. I take the initiative and tell them not to come*." (MSP2)

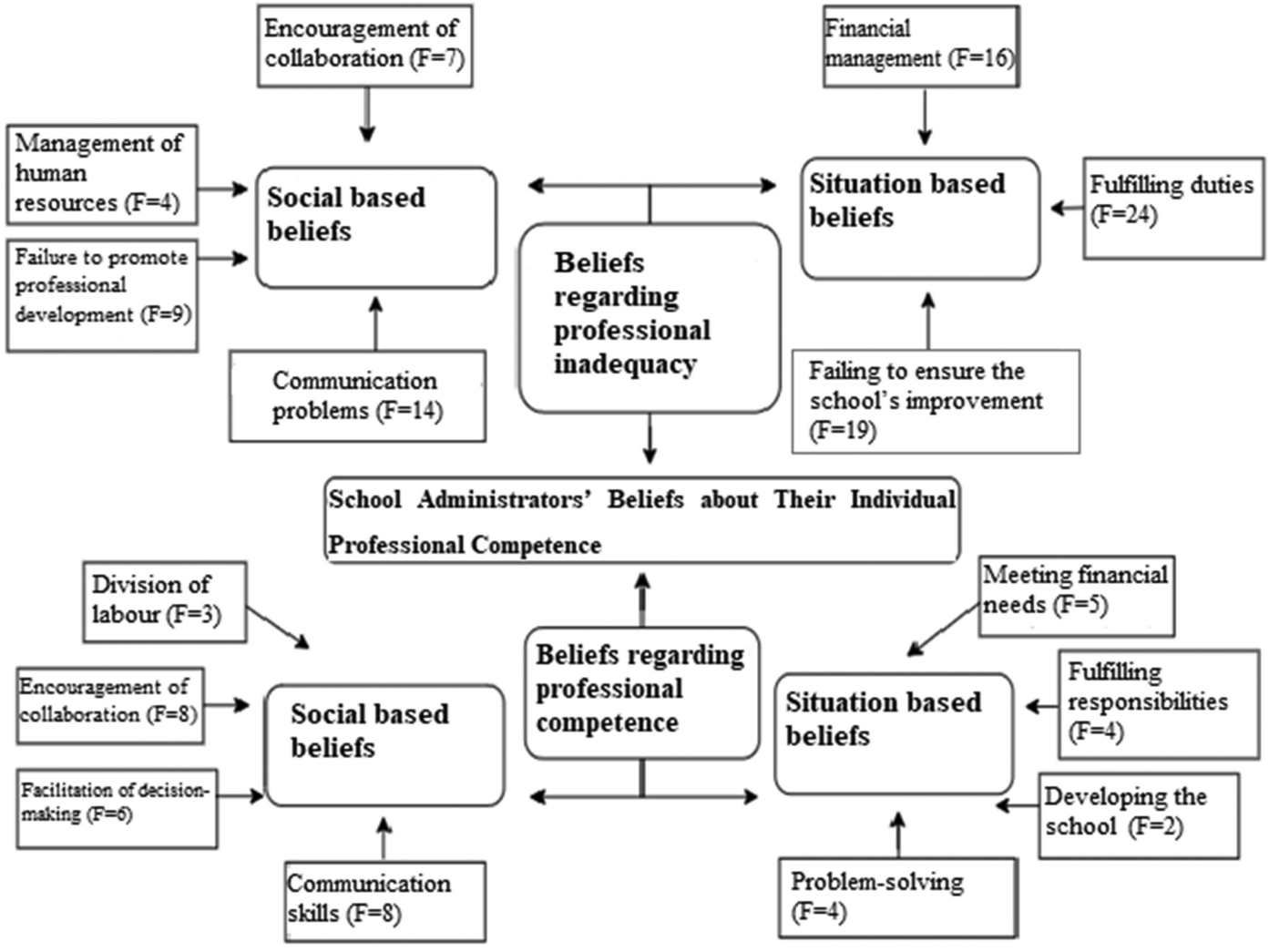

Figure 2.
School Administrators' Beliefs About Their Individual Professional Competence.

Another code emphasized within the sub-theme of "*situation-based beliefs*" in the theme of "*beliefs regarding professional inadequacies*" is the code "*financial management*" (*f*=16). The financial management code comprises the beliefs of school administrators regarding their inability to provide adequate service in providing the necessary financial support for school needs due to the lack of necessary funds allocated for primary and secondary schools. A quotation from the opinions of school principals regarding the "*financial management*" code is presented as follows:

> "*In our secondary schools, there is no budget. We are completely left to our fate. We cannot ask for money from parents, but we can request it as donations. ... If we find a charitable external stakeholder, we can benefit. This year we found one. A benefactor built the school's side wall. The school's owner is the principal, while others are guests. So, I am responsible for the building, as well as the teachers, the cafeteria, the students, and sometimes even the parents. It is not possible to fully accomplish all of these responsibilities. Even if I were competent enough, I wouldn't have the time. If I were to try to take care of the building as required, it wouldn't be possible with my limited time.*" (MSP10)

Regarding the beliefs of school administrators about their individual professional competencies, within the sub-theme of "*social-based beliefs*" (*f* = 34) in the theme of "*beliefs regarding professional inadequacies*," codes such as "*encouragement of collaboration*" (*f* = 7), "*management of human resources*" (*f*=4), "*failure to promote professional development*" (*f*=9), and "*communication problems*" (*f*=14) were identified. Among these codes, the code "*communication problems*" (*f*=14) stood out as the most prominent. The "*communication problems*" code is related to the difficulties school administrators face in reconciling and communicating with parents due to their defensive attitudes. A quotation from one of the school principals' opinions regarding the "*communication problems*" code is presented as follows:

> "*We distributed the kindergarten classes equally between boys and girls using a lottery system. One parent said that they did not want Teacher A even though they did not know any of the teachers. When asked why, they responded that their neighbours spoke highly of another teacher. I tried to persuade them but was unsuccessful. I explained that I believed the teacher chosen through the lottery would be better, and that I could not make any changes. I told them that they had to comply with the lottery. The parent left angry, but next year they will come back and say that our teacher was excellent and thank us.*" (PSP4)

Another code emphasized within the sub-theme of "*social-based beliefs*" in the theme of "*beliefs regarding professional inadequacies*" is the code "*failure to promote professional development*" (*f*=9). This code is related to the belief of the school administrator that they are unable to encourage teachers to participate in efforts to develop their knowledge and skills in the field. Accordingly, they believe that they are ineffective in encouraging teachers to pursue professional development. A quotation from the opinions of school principals regarding the "*failure to promote professional development*" code is presented as follows:

> "*The biggest problem is whether the teacher is willing to participate. If they think they are proficient enough in their field, they can be reluctant to engage in professional development. If they are not willing, then we cannot achieve any productivity in anything we do. When they already feel like they know everything, participation in in-service training activities is low, and we struggle with motivation. I see that classroom teachers are unwilling to involve their students in lessons. As it is a state school, there is nothing we can do.*" (PSP23)

The second theme within the beliefs of school administrators regarding their individual professional competencies is the theme of "*beliefs regarding professional competencies.*" Within this theme, sub-themes of "*social-based beliefs*" (*f* = 25) and "*situation-based beliefs*" (*f* =15) were obtained. Among these, the sub-theme of "*social-based beliefs*" (*f*=25) was emphasized the most. Within the sub-theme of "*socially-based beliefs*," codes such as "*division of labour*" (*f*=3), "*encouragement of collaboration*" (*f*=8), "*facilitation of decision-making*" (*f*=6), and "*communication skills*" (*f*=8) were identified. The codes that were most emphasized under this theme were "*encouragement of collaboration*" (*f*=8) and "*communication skills*" (*f*=8). The "*encouragement of collaboration*" code involves the belief of the administrators that they can motivate teachers to engage in collaborative work based on knowledge and method sharing. A quotation from the opinions of school principals regarding the "*encouragement of collaboration*" code is presented as follows:

> "*When collaborating with teachers, I cannot use the same language with everyone. ...While I can easily communicate and work with some teachers and achieve results quickly, some may not be willing. ... Not every teacher loves their profession ... I try to achieve a balanced distribution. But sometimes, when I see people who are really struggling, I feel like I am burdening the ones who do their job well ... I also try to encourage those who do not do any work. I speak to them in a way that they can understand. I can identify it according to their character.*" (MSP7)

Within the sub-theme of "*social-based beliefs*" of the "*beliefs regarding professional competencies*" theme, another emphasized code is "*communication skills*" (*f*=8). This code reflects the beliefs of school administrators that they possess the willingness and ability to adopt an empathetic and calm approach to resolving conflicts with parents of students. According to the opinions of deputy principals, a quotation regarding the "*communication skills*" code is presented below:

> "*Some parents come to the school to fight; very few come to find solutions. We have very few parents who approach us with the question of how we can solve this problem together. They come directly in anger. Initially, I try to calm them down, to soothe their anger. I invite them to sit down and have a cup of tea or coffee. After that, I try to listen and understand their concerns. If the parent has confidence in the school administration and the operation of the school, they are more comfortable communicating with us.*" (MSDP19)

Within the sub-theme of "*situation-based beliefs*" in the theme of "*beliefs regarding professional inadequacies*," school administrators have identified the codes of "*meeting financial needs*" (*f* = 5), "*fulfilling responsibilities*" (*f* = 4), "*developing the school* " (*f* = 2), and "*problem-solving*" (*f* = 4). Among these, the most emphasized code is "*meeting financial needs*" (*f* = 5). This code encompasses the belief of school administrators that they are capable of providing various financial resources to the school despite the shortage of financial resources in meeting the educational needs. A quotation from the opinions of school principals regarding the "*meeting financial needs*" code is presented as follows:

> "*Managing a school is very difficult. I try to do something and approach the matter idealistically. But sometimes, you cannot see much enthusiasm in the field ... I have completed my third month, and what have I accomplished in the past three months? We are collecting money for our bazaar on Thursday. We have two disabled students who are wheelchair-bound, and we have*

bought them an electric wheelchair. We launched a campaign to do so. We will deliver it to them tomorrow in a ceremony. ... At the same time, we have a sister school in province A. Their resources are very limited. ... We have sent stationery supplies and clothing aid, and they were very happy." (PSP28)

Within the sub-theme of "*situation-based beliefs*" in the theme of "*beliefs regarding professional inadequacies*," another emphasized code is "*problem-solving*" (*f*=4). This code encompasses school administrators' beliefs in their ability to take responsibility and take action to eliminate potential problems that may cause difficulties for students. A quotation from the opinions of school principals regarding the "*problem-solving*" code is presented as follows:

"As an administrator, if you want to do something, you do it. ... You strive to make it better. For example, we have an ongoing construction in our garden. We are not responsible for any part of this construction. ... But I feel responsible myself. I entered the building at every stage, checked it, and pointed out the mistakes. ... There is construction waste outside. We are organising games to keep the children safe. I am not obliged to paint the surroundings of the school, but I found a sponsor to do so." (PSP15)

In conclusion, regarding "*beliefs regarding professional inadequacies*" in terms of "*school administrators' professional competencies*," the sub-theme of "*situation-based beliefs*" encompasses school administrators' individual beliefs about overcoming the flow and processes of the school, while the sub-theme of "*social-based beliefs*" encompasses their beliefs about their inadequacies in dealing with individuals they interact with in the school. Conversely, it can be said that the theme of "*beliefs regarding professional competencies*" and the sub-themes of "*social and situation based beliefs*" contain school administrators' beliefs in their competence in situationally and socially based contexts. Although there may be similarities in naming themes and sub-themes, the codes within them vary.

School Administrators' Beliefs about the Professionalization Process

The third sub-problem of the study was stated as "*How are the beliefs of school administrators about the professionalisation process of school management?*" The themes obtained in line with the data of this sub-problem are given in Figure 3.

Upon examination of Figure 3, four themes emerged from the analysis of the data related to the beliefs of school administrators about the professionalization process, namely "*practice-oriented beliefs*" (*f*=38), "*prerequisite-oriented beliefs*" (*f*=51), "*entry to duty-oriented beliefs*" (*f*=96), and "un*ethical problems-oriented beliefs*" (*f*=18). Among these themes, the most emphasized one was "*entry to duty-oriented beliefs*" (*f*=96).

The predominant theme with respect to school administrators' beliefs concerning the professionalization process pertains to "*entry to duty-oriented beliefs*" (*f*=96). In this regard, the codes "*postgraduate education* (*f*=18), *examination criteria* (*f*=10), *teaching experience* (*f*=13), *professional competence* (*f*=18), *objective criteria* (*f*=10), *administrative internship* (*f*=6), *deputy principal experience* (*f*=12), *and in-service training* (*f*=9)" emerged. Among these codes, "*professional competence*" (*f*=18) and "*postgraduate education*" (*f*=18) were particularly emphasized. The "*professional competence*" code (*f*=18) includes the conviction that evaluating the administrative knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of prospective school administrators is advantageous, in addition to the practical ramifications of such assessments. The following excerpt is taken from the views of one deputy school principal in relation to the "*professional competence*" code:

"*There are administrators who have been in the role for 10 years and still cannot fulfil those qualifications. It wouldn't be very appropriate for a teacher to become a principal right away. Even if they have 20 years of teaching experience, the belief that they can become a principal after only 3 years of assistant principal experience is not correct either. The criteria here is not merely based on years of service. Academic competency is more important than time... Candidate administrators should have experience in a field related to management. Administration is a multidimensional area of expertise. You need to know about everything. In my opinion, certain requirements should be sought for the transition from assistant principal to principal. Because being an administrator is a very different dimension from teaching.*" (HSDP6)

The second theme regarding school administrators' beliefs about the professionalization process is the "*prerequisite-oriented beliefs*" theme. As a result of the analysis, within the scope of school administrators' "*prerequisite-oriented beliefs*" (*f* = 51), the codes "*belief in the temporariness of the position* (*f*=24), *political decisions* (*f*=11), *the ambiguity of appointment criteria* (*f*=5), *and disregarding professional training* (*f*=11)" have been identified. Among these codes, the "*belief in the temporariness of the position*" (*f*=24) code includes the belief that the appointment nature of administration obstructs the development of role-specific values, attitudes, behaviors, objectives, and commitment. Two excerpts from the views of school principals and deputy principals regarding the "*belief in the temporariness of the position*" code are as follows:

"*Since administration is not seen as a profession, we don't take full ownership of the job. There is always a possibility of resignation. We continue by saying, 'I'll resign and return to teaching.' Most people see it as a stepping stone. A teacher working in a small town has no chance of coming to the centre as a teacher. After the appointment is made, they resign and then transfer back.*" (MSDP19)

"*We don't identify ourselves with the role. Before me, this school building was given temporarily. If you give a place temporarily, the person using it won't be very careful. Knowing it's temporary, they don't make an effort to tidy up. The profession is the same. We don't fully give what is deserved. But if you know you'll be staying for a long time, you add something to yourself. Feeling temporary prevents creating and contributing new things.*" (MSP20)

The third theme regarding school administrators' beliefs about the professionalization process is the "*practice-oriented beliefs*" theme. As a result of the analysis, within the scope of school administrators' "*practice-oriented beliefs*" (*f* = 38) theme, the codes "*unclear authority* (*f* = 6), *lack of prestige* (*f* = 4), *lack of encouragement* (*f* = 8), *absence of professional definition* (*f* = 5), *non-objective evaluation* (*f* = 5), *and insufficiency of personal rights* (*f* = 10)" have been identified. Among the "*practice-oriented beliefs*" theme codes, the most prominent is the "*insufficiency of personal rights*" (*f* = 10) code. The "*insufficiency of personal rights*" code is related to implicit assumptions that the limited legal rights and losses of rights in the field of school administration when compared with its area of responsibility, hinder professionalization. An excerpt from the views of a deputy principal regarding the "*insufficiency of personal rights*" code is as follows:

"*Administration is being imposed on us as a second job. ... Since I started, it was said that school administrators would be included in the general administrative classes group and have the rights and responsibilities of that class. Unfortunately, this has not been done. In essence, we are teachers, but we do this*

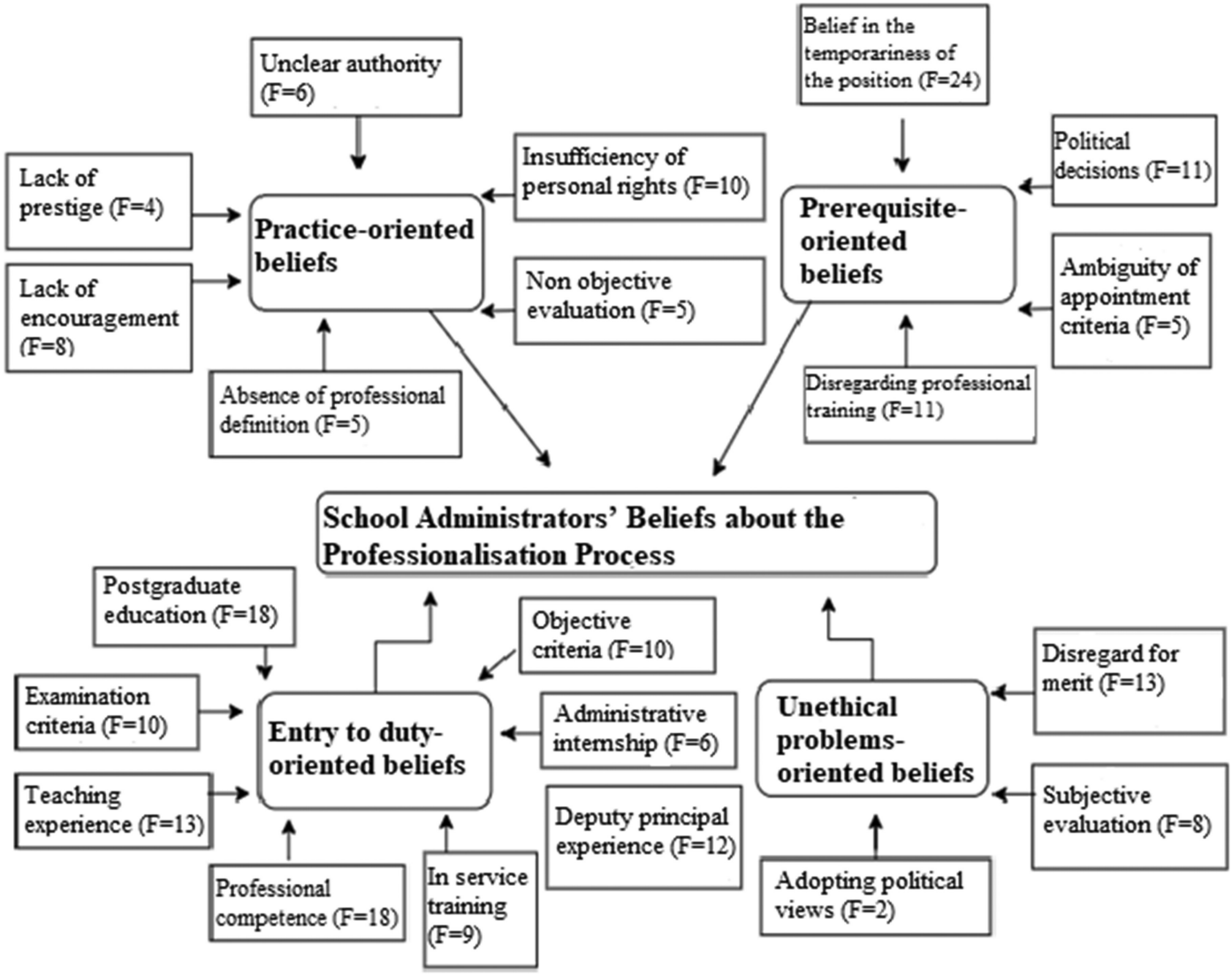

Figure 3.
School Administrators' Beliefs About the Professionalization Process.

job as a second one. School administration does not make a difference in terms of salary or additional lessons. ... There were times when I felt overwhelmed. The remuneration should not be less than what a teacher receives. At least it should be equal." (MSDP19)

The fourth theme regarding school administrators' beliefs about the professionalization process is the "unethical beliefs" theme. As a result of the analysis, within the scope of school administrators' "*unethical problems-oriented beliefs*" (*f* = 18) theme, the codes "*disregard for merit* (*f* = 13), *subjective evaluation* (*f*=8), *and adopting political* views (*f*=2)" have been identified. Among these codes, the "*disregard for merit*" (*f*=13) code is the most prominent. The "*disregard for merit*" (*f=13*) code includes the beliefs that in the administration appointment system, oral exam scores are given in a manner not in accordance with scientific criteria measuring expertise in the field, and that the practice is unjust. Two excerpts from the views of school principals and deputy principals regarding the "*disregard for merit*" code are as follows:

"*In our country, there is no merit-based system in rewarding; exams are held in a symbolic manner, certificates are given and arranged according to certain criteria. Those who comply and those who do not are subject to evaluation.*" (PSDP13)

"*Candidates for administrator selection take the exam symbolically and become principals. ... While there are those with a master's degree, others with an associate degree become principals. Then, why did this person study? I cannot see a very healthy model in the country's standards. Whatever you do remains insufficient. The system is not fair, and neither are the discussions behind closed doors.*" (MSP10)

In conclusion, regarding the "*school administrators' professionalisation process*," the "*entry to duty-oriented beliefs*" theme reveals the criteria that school administrators believe should be present in administrator appointments, while the "*practice-oriented beliefs*" theme illustrates the beliefs that legal basis and evaluation problems related to school administration practices hinder professionalization. The "*prerequisite-oriented beliefs*" theme identifies the factors that school administrators believe hinder professionalization in the preconditions used for entry into administration. The "unethical problems-oriented beliefs" theme contains negative beliefs related to the criteria used in practice for the appointment of school administrators.

Memories Containing Beliefs About School Administration

The fourth sub-problem of the study is stated as "*How do school administrators describe their beliefs about school administration in their memories?*" The themes obtained in line with the data for this sub-problem are provided in Figure 4.

Upon examining Figure 4, the analysis of the data related to "*school administrators' beliefs about school administration in their memories*" resulted in two themes: "*Beliefs about managerial areas*" (*f* = 26) and "*self-efficacy beliefs on management*" (*f*=34). Among these themes, "*self-efficacy beliefs on management*" (*f*=34) have been emphasized the most.

The first theme regarding the distribution of memories containing school administrators' beliefs about school administration is the "*self-efficacy beliefs on management*" theme. As a result of the analysis, within the "*self-efficacy beliefs on management*" (*f*=34) theme, the codes "*emotional impact*" (*f*=12), "*conflict resolution*" (*f*=5), "*effort*" (*f*=10), "*crisis management*" (*f*=3), "*goal achievement*" (*f*=2), and "*relocation*" (*f*=2) were found. Among these codes, "*emotional impact*" (*f*=12) stands out. The "*emotional impact*" code generally includes the negative emotions related to the experiences of school administrators during their appointment and tenure in accordance with their self-efficacy beliefs. An excerpt from the views of one of the school principals regarding the "emotional impact" code is as follows:

> "*My colleagues at the school I was working at told me to take the exam and go to the interview. I went reluctantly and the results were announced. I didn't even want to apply. Because I had been to the interview seven times. Finally, I came to this school. It turned out that the person who was supposed to come to this school had set their sights on another school and didn't apply, so I was assigned. When my colleagues came here, they said that there must have been a mistake, and I shouldn't have come here. Unfortunately, we can only progress to a certain point as these matters are purified from political concerns.*" (HSP23)

Another code highlighted within the "*self-efficacy beliefs on management*" theme is the "*effort*" (*f*=10) code. The "*effort*" code includes

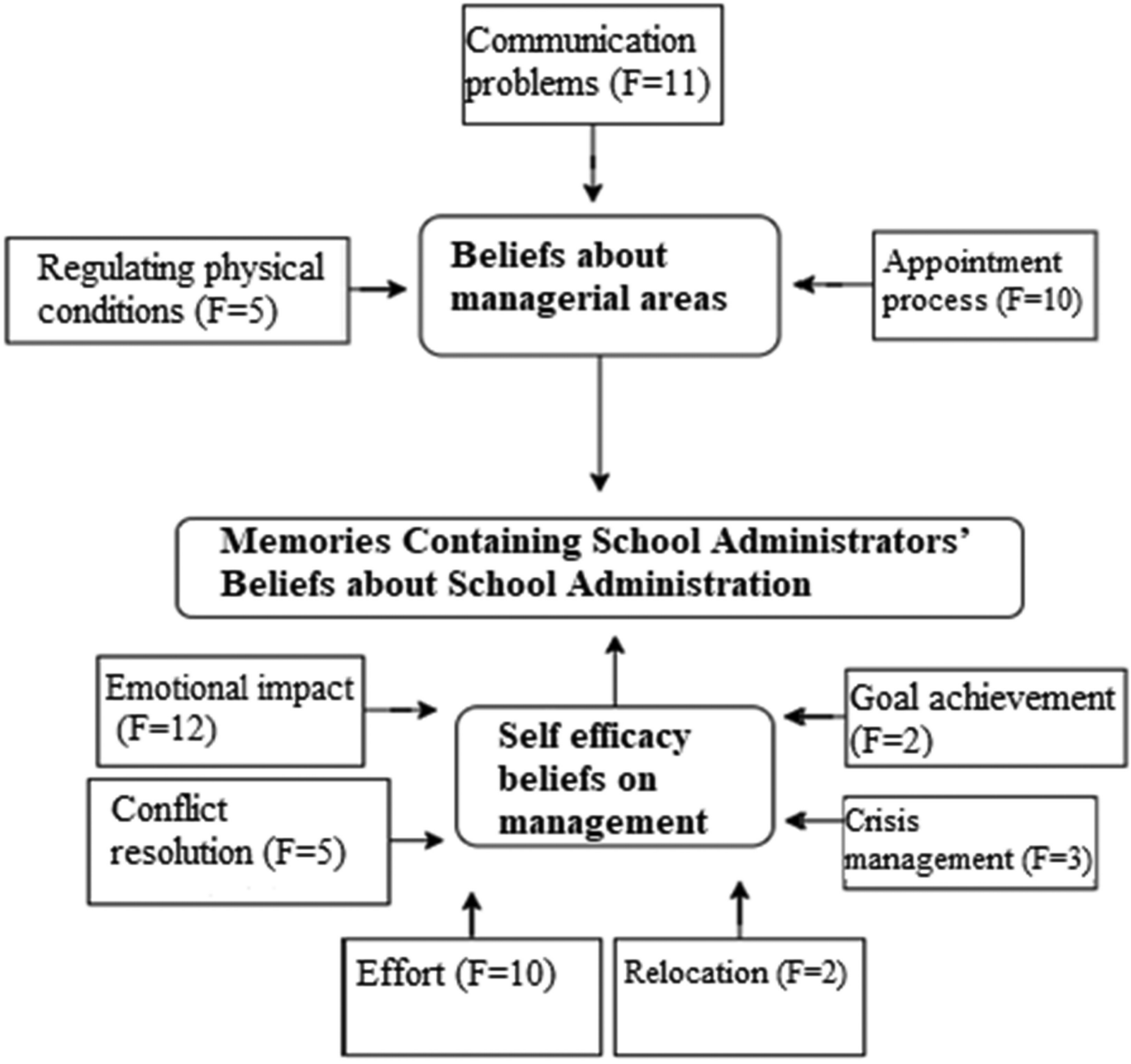

Figure 4.
Memories Containing School Administrators' Beliefs About School Administration.

the decisions and actions taken by school administrators to reduce the impact of negative events experienced on the job in line with their beliefs about themselves. Accordingly, an excerpt from the views of the school principals regarding the "*effor*t" code is as follows:

> *"I was appointed to the school by preference. I came on Saturday and toured the school. I saw that the school's outer doors were open, so I went in. I thought someone must be here. Then I noticed that the other doors were also open. ...I was shocked not to find what I expected in terms of the building. My weakest characteristic was this: I hated dealing with building-related matters, and I used to say 'what do I have to do with it?', but I couldn't say that here. I went up to the roof and down to the shelter… I called the contractor. It felt like I had descended from a village to a city when I started my duty here. I had half of the building constructed … I became a builder here. Actually, it turned out to be a good thing. I faced the things I feared. These became my responsibilities now.*" (MSP10)

In the distribution of memories containing school administrators' beliefs about school management, within the theme of "*beliefs about managerial areas*," there are "*regulating physical conditions* (*f*=5), *communication problems* (*f*=11), and *appointment process* (*f* = 10)" codes. The "*communication problems*" (*f* = 11) code has emerged as the most prominent code within the "beliefs about managerial areas" theme. The "*communication problems*" code is related to communication issues that school administrators experience with parents, teachers, inspectors, bureaucracy, and their predecessors. Accordingly, an excerpt from the views of school principals regarding the "communication problems" code is as follows:

> "*In the summer, we enroll close to 450 classroom students. We receive an incredible amount of phone calls. Everyone is trying to make requests through acquaintances. We explain to them in a suitable language that it is not possible. ... They call from one level higher, we refuse and explain that it cannot be done. As much as possible, I ask for help from the district national education director and the district governor. But the calls we receive from NGOs, associations, politicians, and municipalities are really disturbing. In this sense, I feel like I am doing my duty according to their commands. That's why I am very disturbed by these calls.*" (PSP27)

Another code highlighted within the "*beliefs about managerial areas*" theme is the "*appointment process*" (*f*=10) code. The "*appointment process*" code includes the beliefs of school administrators about the nature of the criteria used in their appointment process and the causes of their positive and negative experiences. An excerpt from the views of the school principals regarding the "*appointment process*" code is as follows:

> "*There were small problems that started earlier, but they began to grow at the end of my fourth year. A small but influential community thought it was inappropriate for me to work in the Imam Hatip High School because I was not covering my head. I was appointed with the highest score, but it was claimed that I was a bad example for the girls studying at Imam Hatip High School because I didn't cover my head. In the end, they didn't let me work at the school I deserved, even though I was appointed there for the second time. They made me work at other duties and places. … This pointless debate was also adorned with sentences like 'she doesn't seem to be close to the union'. There were political identities that were influential in principal appointments or reassignments. Of course, since we could not reach high authorities and explain ourselves, I had to struggle with such ugly issues.*" (HSP15)

In conclusion, in terms of "*memories containing school administrators' beliefs about school management*," the theme of "*beliefs about managerial areas*" covers the assumptions about the nature of the task mentioned in the school administrators' memories. The "*self-efficacy beliefs on management*" theme has been identified as the assumptions about the consequences of individual attitudes and reactions related to their managerial experiences in their memories.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This study has investigated the beliefs of school administrators regarding school management. The beliefs about the qualities of administrative duties have been categorized under the themes of *social-oriented*, *situation-precondition-oriented*, and *experience-oriented beliefs*. The "*social-oriented* beliefs" theme predominantly encompasses beliefs related to the task primarily involving interpersonal relationships. While there are no direct research findings on professional beliefs in the literature, some indirect research findings exhibit similarities with the theme *of social-oriented* beliefs in the current study. Balyer (2012) posits that school management is transitioning from an exclusively technical management focus toward community expertise, emphasizing the significance of good human relations. Research findings by Larsen & Hunter (2014) and Yıldırım & Alp (2017) suggest that effective "*communication*" constitutes a fundamental component of management. Moreover, in CoreStates' study regarding the expected behaviors of school administrators, emphasis was placed on the importance of open, sincere, and attentive communication within the core values they established in relation to management (Türkmenoğlu & Bülbül, 2015). Voorhis & Sheldon (2004) corroborate the findings in the literature by asserting that school administrators primarily undertake roles in managing relationships with the school, families, and other segments of the community. This situation can be explicated through the sense-making theory, wherein organizational members attribute meaning to events occurring within the school by communicating with each other. Meanings are formed when classifications and patterns derived from past experiences are combined with new data. In this context, if school administrators fail to create positive meanings as opposed to negative ones based on their experiences with school members, it may impact their behaviors and negatively shape their new experiences. In parallel with this, the "*communication problems*" code has emerged as the most salient within the theme of "*beliefs about managerial areas*," which covers assumptions about the nature of the task mentioned in the memories of school administrators containing beliefs about school management. In this regard, based on the findings obtained from the interview and narrative form, the reason why participants emphasize socially oriented beliefs about the nature of management may be related to the fact that this is the area where they expend the most effort and time, encounter the most problems, and perceive the need for support.

In this study, individual professional competency beliefs of school administrators have been examined, with the themes of "*beliefs regarding professional competencies*" and "beliefs regarding professional inadequacies" being identified. Within the theme of "*beliefs regarding professional inadequacies*," sub-themes of "*situation-based beliefs*" and "*social-based beliefs*" have emerged. The sub-theme of "*situation based beliefs*" has been named based on the individual beliefs of school administrators in overcoming the workflow and processes within the school. In the literature, it has been determined that school administrators primarily experience problems related to managing school budgets and general administrative services (Çınkır, 2010; Sarıce, 2006). Furthermore, it is well-known that numerous problems arise from the physical conditions of schools in Türkiye (Demirtaş et al., 2007; Şahin, 2013). Tanrıöğen & Yücel (2007) have also noted that school administrators lack flexibility in building maintenance

and repair, and despite their authority, they cannot cope with physical problems due to financial issues. From the perspective of authority and responsibility, the literature (Özdayı, 2001) has indicated that school administrators experience difficulties in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities due to insufficient authority. However, the theoretical foundations of school management emphasize the importance and competency of professional specialization. According to Bolman and Deal's four-frame theory, organizations possess structural, human, symbolic, and political dimensions, which influence one another. From a structural perspective, it can be said that school administrators have limited legal support when carrying out their duties. In terms of the human resources framework, the variability of criteria in the selection of school administrators suggests that some communication-related competencies may not be met (Tanrıöğen et al., 2014). On the other hand, from an institutional theory perspective, the inadequate empowerment of the school administration by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) results in individuals appointed on the basis of the "*isomorphism principle"* only fulfilling minimum legitimacy standards (Miles, 2016), thereby limiting the effectiveness and efficiency of school administration and nurturing negative beliefs about management. In this context, the reason for school administrators' "*beliefs regarding professional inadequacies*" may be attributed to their inability to overcome the problems encountered in schools, the lack of consideration for a scientific upbringing process when entering the profession, the negative socioeconomic conditions of schools, or structural barriers. From another perspective, it can be inferred that school administrators attempt to strengthen their social competencies to compensate for their situationally based inadequacy beliefs. Furthermore, within the theme of "*self-efficacy beliefs on management*" relating to memories containing beliefs about school management, the assumptions of school administrators about the outcomes of their individual attitudes and reactions based on their administrative experiences have been evaluated. Findings indicate that negative emotions and attitudes are more prevalent as a result of the administrators' experiences. A review of the literature reveals that Tabancalı & Su (2021) found that school administrators experience role ambiguity related to the tasks expected of them. Demirtaş & Küçük (2014) reported that school administrators feel negatively impacted by the constant changes in regulations. Additionally, Toprakçı et al., (2019) found that school administrators could solve certain problems in schools only after dedicating considerable time and effort. It has also been noted that some school administrators begin their duties reluctantly due to various issues. When examining the past experiences of school administrators, it is evident that negative models have shaped the development of their professional beliefs. As a result, according to Bandura's self-efficacy theory, the sources of self-efficacy affect administrators' objectives, their efforts in their work, their learning, and their determination to undertake new and challenging tasks (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013). On the other hand, from the perspective of institutional theory (Miles, 2016), the narrow consideration of the needs of the school and its human resources as a subsystem of the MoNE may lead to a decrease in the perceived legitimacy of the management role, deviation from norms, and an increase in negative professional beliefs among school administrators. The prominence of "*self-efficacy beliefs on management*" in school administrators' memories can be attributed to their having to deal with problems on their own and not receiving adequate support from external sources in their negative experiences.

School administrators' beliefs regarding the professionalization process have been defined based on the common characteristics of the codes under the themes of "*entry to duty, practice, prerequisite, and unethical problems-oriented beliefs*." The theme of "*entry to duty-oriented beliefs*" is based on the views of school administrators covering the professional competence believed to be necessary for their appointment. According to Akçadağ (2014) and Cemaloğlu (2005), school administrators should have more than 2 years of management experience before entering the position. In the literature (Carter, 1994), in the United States, an active school administrator is expected to complete an internship under the guidance of an expert education administrator in an administrator training program. Different findings in the literature suggest that the necessary knowledge and skills are acquired through in-service training for entry into the position (Akçadağ, 2014), examination criteria (Günay, 2004; Türkmenoğlu & Bülbül, 2015), and obtaining a master's degree in education management (Bush & Jackson, 2002; Cemaloğlu, 2005; Recepoğlu & Kılınç, 2014). On the other hand, Arabacı et al. (2015) argue that the appointment method is not objective, politics is involved in education, and unionism is the most determinant factor in appointment criteria. Turan & Şişman (2000) state that political favoritism has been added to school administration in Türkiye, expertise and competence in school management have been neglected, and the education system has been politicized. According to Bolman and Deal's four-frame theory, the dominant influence of bureaucracy in the existing hierarchy leads to power conflicts at the grassroots level among school administrators and different paths to taking office, resulting in the adoption of political attitudes and nurturing negative beliefs. At the same time, from the perspective of the human resources framework, the existence of negative beliefs about the criteria for selecting school administrators creates significant problems in terms of the continuity of educational practices in the school. Based on the literature and current research findings, the reason for the emergence of "*professional competence beliefs*" that include school administrators' expectations may be due to their idealized expectations, variability of appointment criteria, disregard for merit, and witnessing subjective evaluations. The priority of school administrators' beliefs regarding the professionalization process in entering the profession may be an indicator of the negativity of their beliefs about the scientific nature of the administrator appointment criteria and process.

In line with the findings obtained from both the interviews and memories of school administrators, the lack of job security for school management as a profession has been frequently emphasized by the participants. Due to this deficiency, it can be said that negative experiences and sources affecting the professional beliefs of school administrators have emerged. Although school administration is defined as a duty, it has been carried out as a profession for many years. However, the variability of the process individually and legally limits the efforts of professionalization and professional identification. Therefore, according to Gürsel (1996), problems such as favoritism in the selection of school administrators and the decrease in their status and prestige structure professional beliefs. According to Bolman and Deal's four-frame theory, when inconsistencies arise in the structural dimension, there is a need for reformation to resolve the inconsistency. This can result in a loss of meaning regarding the current roles of organization members and the symbols of the organization from a symbolic framework perspective. It requires leaders or administrators to reshape the symbols of the organization. In this regard, it can be said that school administrators cannot act together as a professional community where occupational standards cannot be formed due to factors such as "*beliefs regarding professional inadequacies*" and "*role confusion*" experienced after taking office and that there are deficiencies in legal regulations. In this direction, it is necessary to define school management as a profession in the laws and ensure continuity. Since "*authority ambiguity*" and "*insufficiency of personal rights*" are seen as significant problems in the professionalization barriers of school administrators, the authorities of school administrators can be clarified by laws, and the contradictory practices experienced by school administrators can be reduced. In addition, improving the salaries of school administrators and addressing the deficiencies in personal rights can contribute to correcting negative beliefs.

As school administrators emphasize "*social-based beliefs*" about the nature of the administrative duty, it is necessary to develop human relations to cope with negative experiences. Increasing social interactions with school stakeholders, planning periodic feedback-oriented interviews with parents, teachers, and students, and developing the competencies of school administrators in this area can be ensured. In this regard, school administrators can be encouraged to collaborate with other school administrators and promote professional learning teams.

Since "*self-efficacy beliefs on management*" stand out in the professional inadequacy beliefs of school administrators, professional development training can be provided to help school administrators overcome problems. In addition, the theme of "*entry to duty-oriented beliefs*" related to the beliefs of school administrators about the professionalization process has come to the fore. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid constantly changing the appointment policy which contains the criteria of entry to duty and to address the "deficiencies in the evaluation system" in the appointment of school administrators.

Contribution Declaration of Researchers

We declare that the authors jointly contributed to the research.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethics committee approval was received for this study from the ethics committee of Ege University (Date: September 29, 2021, Number: 11.3.1091).

Informed Consent: Written informed consent was obtained from all participants who participated in this study.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Author Contributions: Author Contributions: Concept – E.A., Design – E.A; Supervision – E.A.; Resources – E.A., K.O.; Materials – E.A., K.O.; Data Collection and/or Processing – E.A., K.O.; Analysis and/or Interpretation – E.A., K.O.; Literature Search – E.A., K.O.; Writing Manuscript – E.A., K.O.; Critical Review – E.A; Other – E.A.

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