



Original article

## A Qualitative Research on the Characteristics of Senior Education Administrators

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### Abstract

Today, with the effect of the globalization vision, the management systems and policies of the states have changed and continuous development has become a necessity. Education policies are also frequently reviewed in order to keep up with these developments and changes, and education systems are arranged according to these changes. Therefore, the most important question is; "How can we manage the education system more effectively?" is in the form.

In this process, where international competition has increased, national borders have virtually disappeared and education has become global, the decision-making and problem-solving roles of senior education administrators have also gained importance. The characteristics of senior education administrators who have an important role in the training of qualified manpower, are decisive both in the efficient, effective, qualified and rational use of scarce resources and in the quality of the provision of education services.

Behavioral and personal characteristics, task awareness, education, belief in science, intellectual, artistic, managerial characteristics, leadership characteristics, strategic thinking and environmental awareness of senior education administrators are an important component in the successful management of educational institutions.

In the research; it is aimed to determine the managerial characteristics of the administrators who work as senior education administrators in educational institutions and their reflection on the management process. In the research, the "descriptive method" was used, which is based on gathering the information on the subject and determining the problems and making applicable inferences for the solution of these problems. The research data were obtained by interview technique with senior education administrators, coded in accordance with the purpose of the research, interrelated data were brought together, processed in the maxqda program with content analysis and the results were interpreted and the contribution of the features that should be found in senior education administrators to adapt to changing environmental conditions and change has been examined.

**Keywords:** Senior Tier, Education Administrator, Training Senior Education Administrators, Senior Education Administrator Training Policies.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

While administration expresses an organization, it is also a concept that includes the activities of the organization. There is administration work in all human activities since the existence of mankind. There must be a purpose for the administration to occur and planned activities for the realization of that purpose. In this context administration is an organization created for the realization of a determined purpose or a planned and programmed human activity carried out for the fulfillment of this purpose (Gözübüyük, 2011). In other words, with the aim of moving a rock from one place to another, it is administration that the individuals who undertake that purpose act together within the plan and move the stone to the desired location (Hansen and Tummers, 2020).

“Administration is the coordination of human and material resources with planned, organizational, directing, coordination and supervision processes in order for public institutions and organizations and businesses to achieve their corporate goals” (Seçtim and Erkul, 2020).

After the industrial revolution, administration was considered as a science. In the pre-industrial period, while administration was called "swinging away", it began to be perceived as both science and art after the industrial revolution. When the information society comes to the fore today, it has gained importance to produce information in private and institutional areas, to reach information and to use information (Agarwal, 2018). We have transitioned to an information society in which the produced information evolves into technology and thus social transformation is achieved.

The rapid changes and innovations in today's world have not been only in terms of individual, social or institutional aspects. Information has become a commodity that is produced very rapidly, constantly changing hands, consumed rapidly, but which is just as important. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where information technologies and digitalization have increased, national and international borders have disappeared with virtual environments and the pace of competition has reached a level that cannot be reached. Because these developments in technology are among the dynamics that shape the information society (Bogdanowicz et. al., 2003).

Organizational structures, administration styles and processes have changed in the information society. Especially during the pandemic process, people carried out their shopping by ordering on tablets, administrators managed their work as home-office from their homes, teachers taught their classes online (distance) from their homes and they were able to share information with individuals who were far away, thanks to technology. Therefore, the process of transition to information society with digitalization has affected education, school and their administration. Information technologies have been widely used in school administrations and learning processes (Akbaba-Altun and Gürer, 2008).

Information and change management in school administrations made organizational learning compulsory. While the concept of learning came to the fore, educational administration had to be

organized in line with the evolving information society requirements. In traditional education administration, the main role is considered to be to transmit education, while in the information society, the school and the teacher are no longer the only source of information; the school has turned into an institution where the ways of accessing information are taught, information is reproduced rapidly, and digitalization is also included in the process (Özden, 2005).

In the history of society, schools have been accepted as places where mass education is made, but they have begun to develop and renew with industrialization, digitalization and modernization. The rapid development in information technologies and digitalization has broadly developed into the field of education as “computer assisted education and online (distance) education. Due to the fact that the world has turned into an information society today, the schools have ceased to be the only place where knowledge is gained. Information can now be obtained in virtual and digital environments. Therefore, learning is not limited to school. Learning shows its existence in every moment of life now. Schools which are physical places in the modern sense, have turned into virtual schools thanks to the internet (Özden, 2005). From the point of view of teachers, the process of teaching a subject-centered and specific curriculum in traditional school environments has turned into individual learning and learning to learn instead of teaching. While teachers are seen as educators who teach, guide and guide the ways of learning from now on, students in the information society have turned into individuals who learn to learn. Today's students first learn how to learn and become a part of the process of reproduction of knowledge in their schools.

The rapid change in the transition to the information society has also changed the learning theories and methods. The new generation students prefer methods such as self-learning, continuous learning, learning by experiencing, practicing, experiencing and repeating learning, learning from the computer and they have led to the formation of theories such as cooperative learning, learning by doing projects, learning by discovery (Jitsoonthornchaikul, 2018).

Due to the rapid change of society and the constant updating of information, students, teachers, school administrators and of course senior education administrators need to constantly review their goals in terms of their fields, update and redefine themselves. Education administrators, especially senior education administrators who manage the constantly renewed education process have to keep up with this transformation rapidly. There is a need for multicultural and innovative education understanding and practices in the pluralistic and complex education process instead of the monotonous education model.

Considering all these reasons, it is observed that there is a need for change in the roles and competencies of senior education administrators. Senior education administrators will relinquish their role in providing resources in schools and will need to devote time to learning issues in order to become “an instructional leader”. Considering that the number of universities, where face-to-face education has

been replaced by distance education has increased in the world, it is a reality that there may be primary schools, secondary schools or high schools providing distance education (Perraton, 2020).

In order to catch up with the era in education, it is necessary to start innovations from senior education administrators, because senior education administrators are people who look at events from a wider perspective, determine corporate strategies and have important duties, authorities and responsibilities at the highest level in their organization. They are the guides of National Education. They are the beneficiaries of human resources, financial resources, physical resources and knowledge. They are the most successful people in planning, organizing, leading/directing and supervising. They are the people who have human skills, technical skills, and conceptual skills. They are the ones who can easily adapt to the current changes that may affect the administration activities and manage the process successfully. They are the people who determine the academic success of education, set high expectations for students and teachers, lead instructional leadership, implement collaborative and participatory administration with employees, use resources and time effectively and efficiently, maintain order in schools and evaluate results well (Çelenk, 2002).

The personality traits of the senior education administrators must be better than the middle and lower-level education administrators. They must manage who have conceptual and technical skills, have no communication problems, must be self-renewing and open to learning. They must think scientifically and have artistic aspects. They must be environmentally conscious and they must take strategic decisions. They must having a leader spirit, and they must be really successful. They must be at a much better level in terms of both technical and academic characteristics.

In this study, it is aimed to reveal the characteristics of senior education administrators. In the light of the information in the field literature, characteristics such as personality traits, attitude and behavior characteristics, task conscious characteristics, being an educator, scientific characteristics, intellectual and artistic characteristics, managerial characteristics, leadership characteristics and strategic managerial characteristics of senior education administrators were searched. In social sciences preferred a statistical program which is maxqda, revealed the current situation of senior education administrators and as a result of the analysis, other features that should be found in senior education administrators were presented as a solution proposal.

## **MATERIALS and METHODS**

The data were obtained through an interview form consisting of 19 open-ended questions. The form consisting of 19 questions was sent by e-mail from Çanakkale Provincial Directorate of National Education to all District National Education Directors in Çanakkale and the answers were obtained via e-mail. In the analysis of the data, the data were evaluated using the content analysis method and the

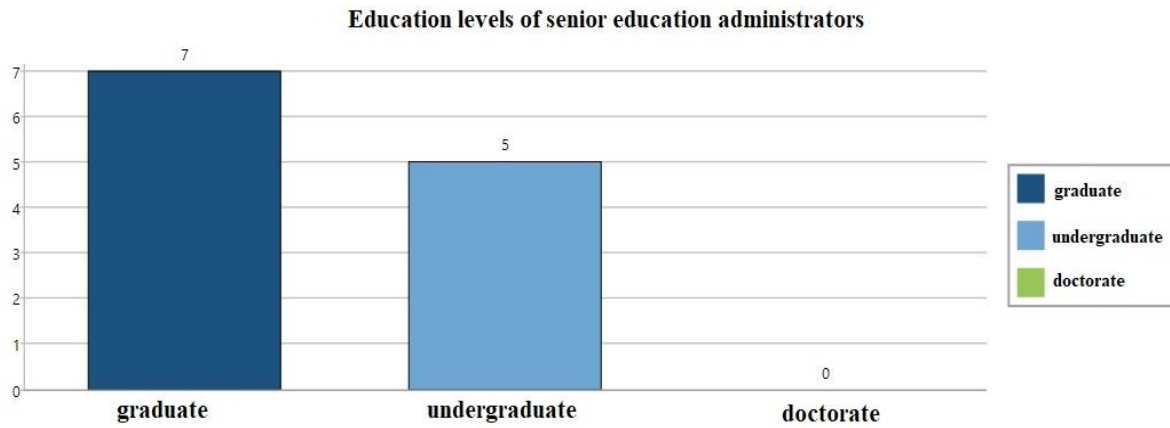
Maxqda program. The 19 questions asked within the scope of the survey and the data obtained in this context are given in detail in the conclusion and discussion section.

## RESULTS and DISCUSSION

In the research 19 interview questions were asked to 12 senior education administrators in Çanakkale and the data obtained were evaluated by evaluating the tables for each question in the maxqda program and categorizing them in 9 separate tables.

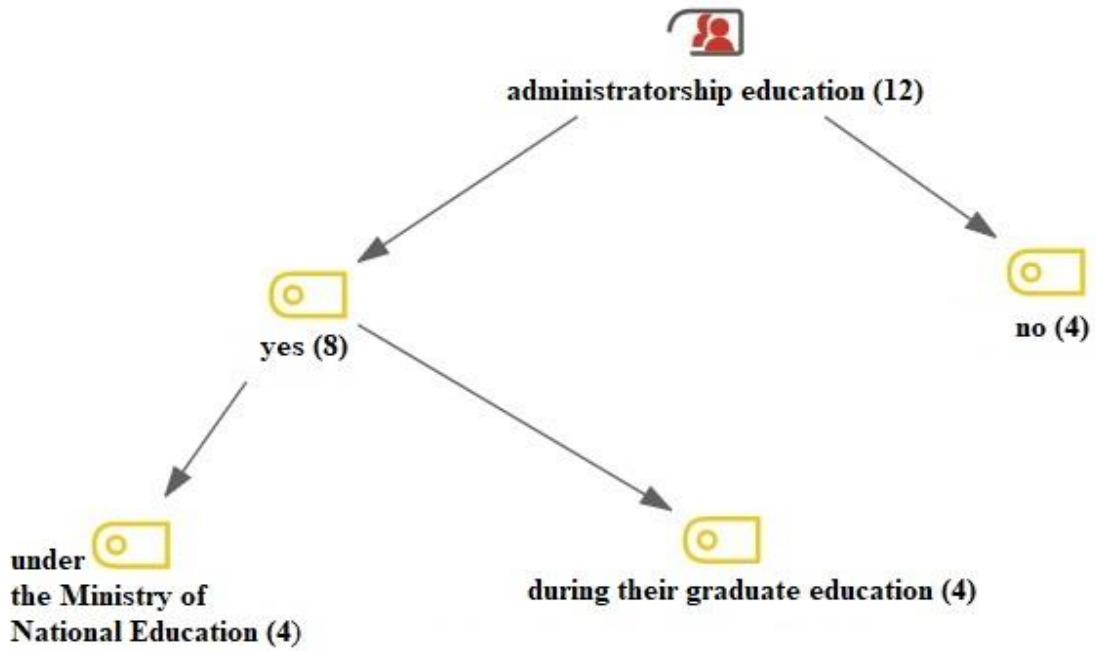
The prepared interview questions are about senior education administrators and their characteristics. Senior education administrators were asked about the personal, scientific, managerial, behavioral characteristics and others that a senior education administrator should have.

**Data 1.** In the first question the education levels of the senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked. It was observed that 5 of the 12 district national education administrators completed undergraduate and 7 master's degrees, but there was no district national education director who completed the doctoral program (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Education levels of senior education administrators in Çanakkale.

**Data 2.** In the second question it was asked whether the senior education administrators in Çanakkale had received administration training. It was learned that 8 of the 12 administrators took the administration training but 4 of them did not. It was learned that 4 of the 8 administrators who received administration training received in-service training under the Ministry of National Education and the other 4 administrators received during their graduate education (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Whether the senior education administrators in Çanakkale received administration training or not.

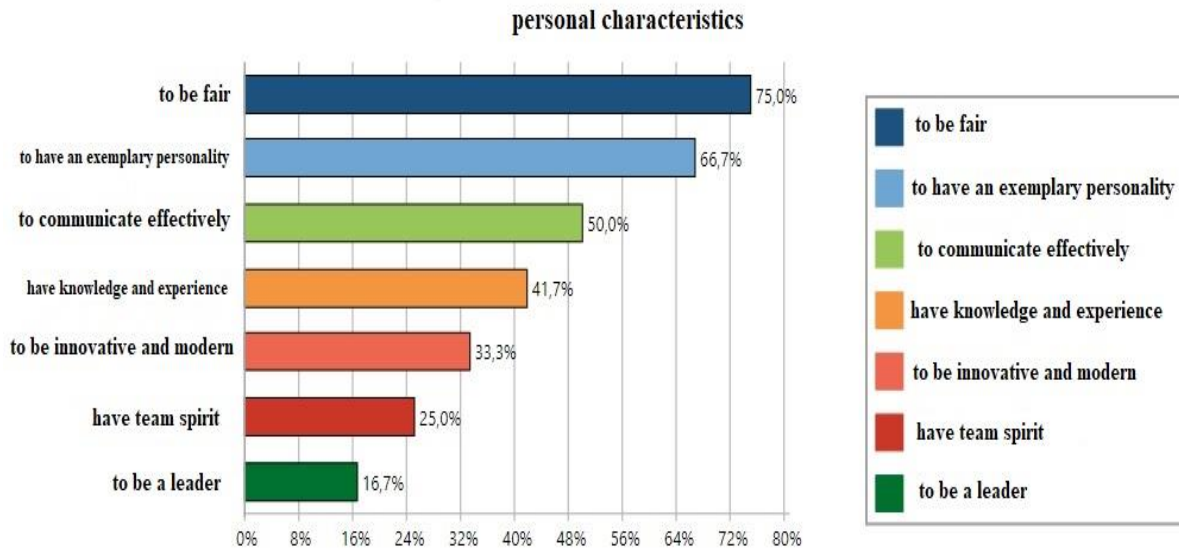
**Data 3.** In the third question, the senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked about their managerial characteristics and the idea of having the ability to organize took the first place with 66.7 % (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Managerial characteristics of senior education administrators.

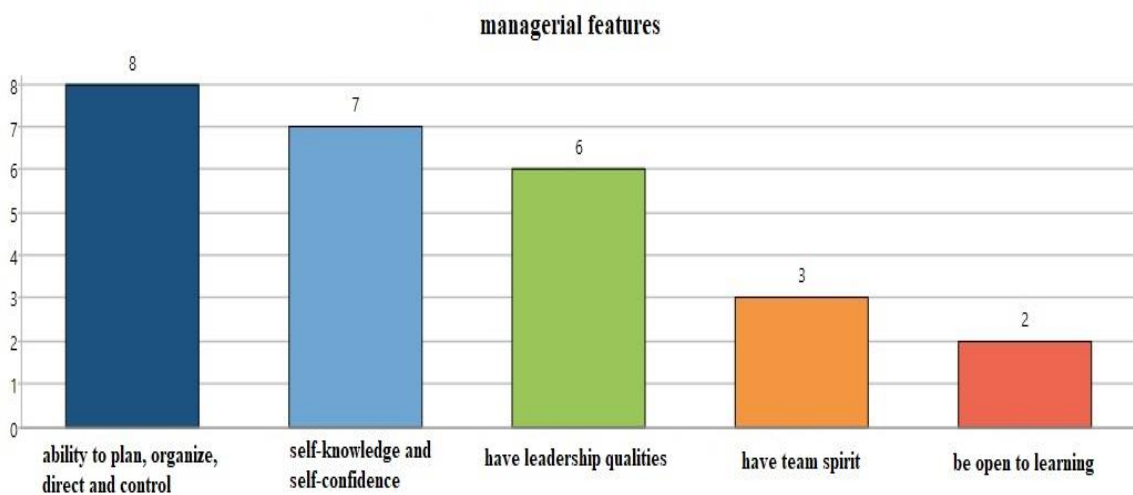
**Data 4.** In the fourth question senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked about their personal characteristics. Emphasis was placed on “being fair” with 75%. Personal characteristics

such as having an exemplary personality, being able to communicate effectively, having knowledge and experience are listed (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Personal characteristics of senior education administrators in Çanakkale.

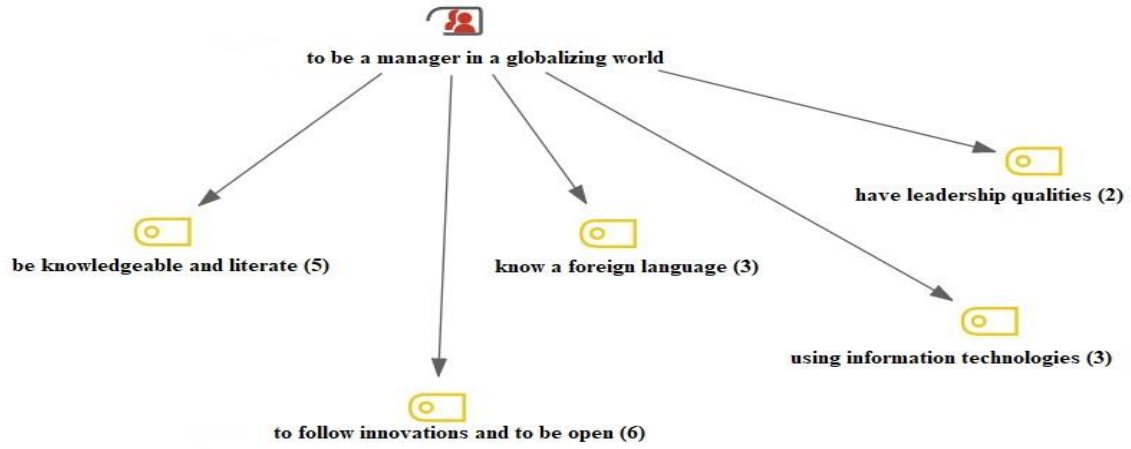
**Data 5.** In the fifth question, senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked about their managerial characteristics. Managerial features are those that include concepts such as time management, organizational ability, problem solving, planning and planning, resource supply and management. Therefore 8 out of 12 District Director of National Education in Çanakkale gave information on planning, organizing and controlling (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Administrative characteristics of senior education administrators.

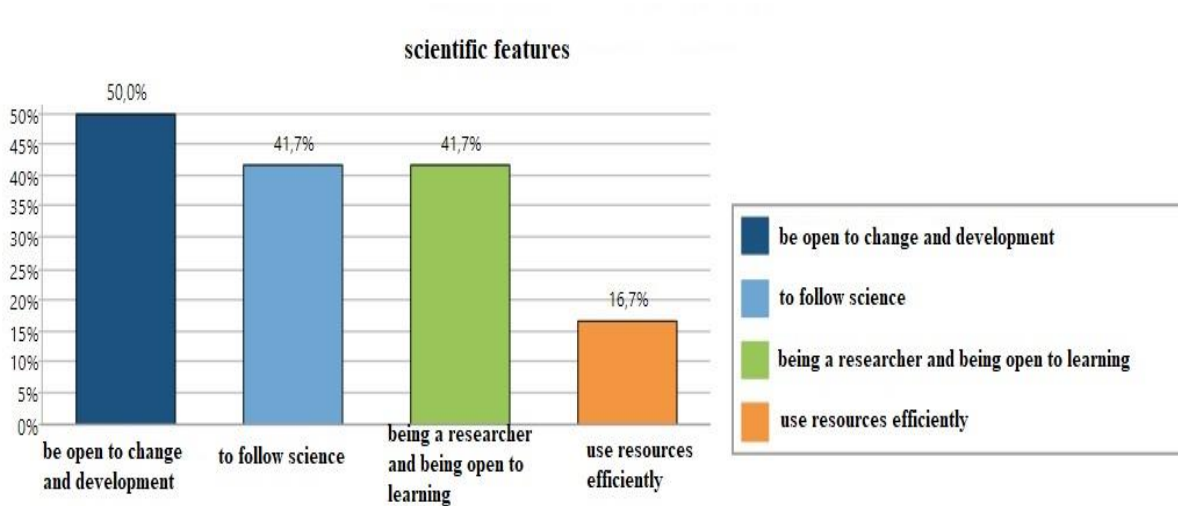
**Data 6.** In the sixth question the necessary conditions for being a administrator in a globalized and digitalized world were asked to the senior education administrators in Çanakkale. Half of the 12

District Director of National Education in Çanakkale said “to be able to follow innovations and to be open”. Emphasis is placed on having knowledge and being literate (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Conditions for senior education administrators to be administrators in a globalized and digitalized world.

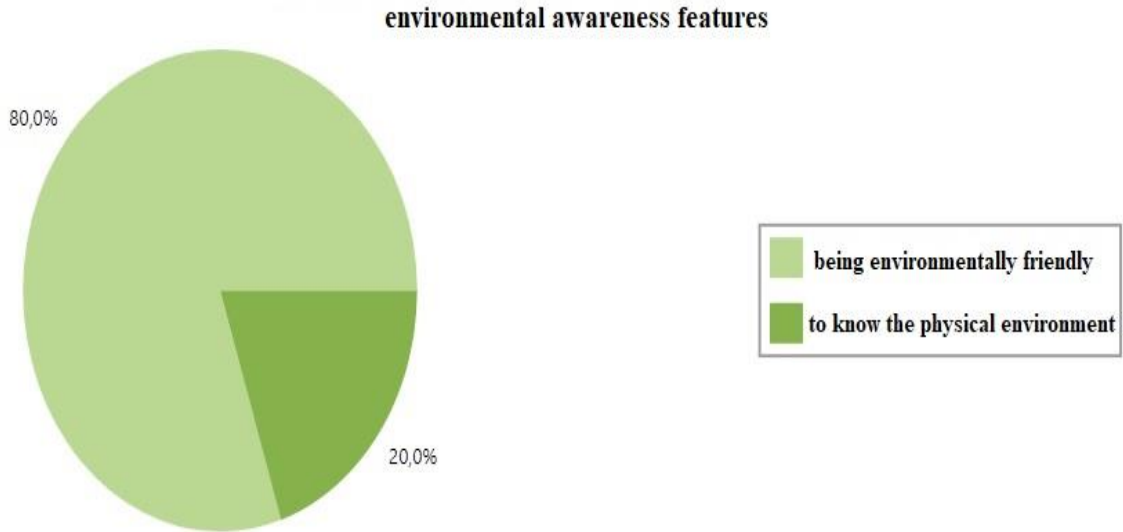
**Data 7.** In the seventh question the senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked about their scientific characteristics. Half of the participants gave the answer to be open to change and development. Also the subjects of following science, being a researcher, being open to learning were also emphasized (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Scientific characteristics of senior education administrators.

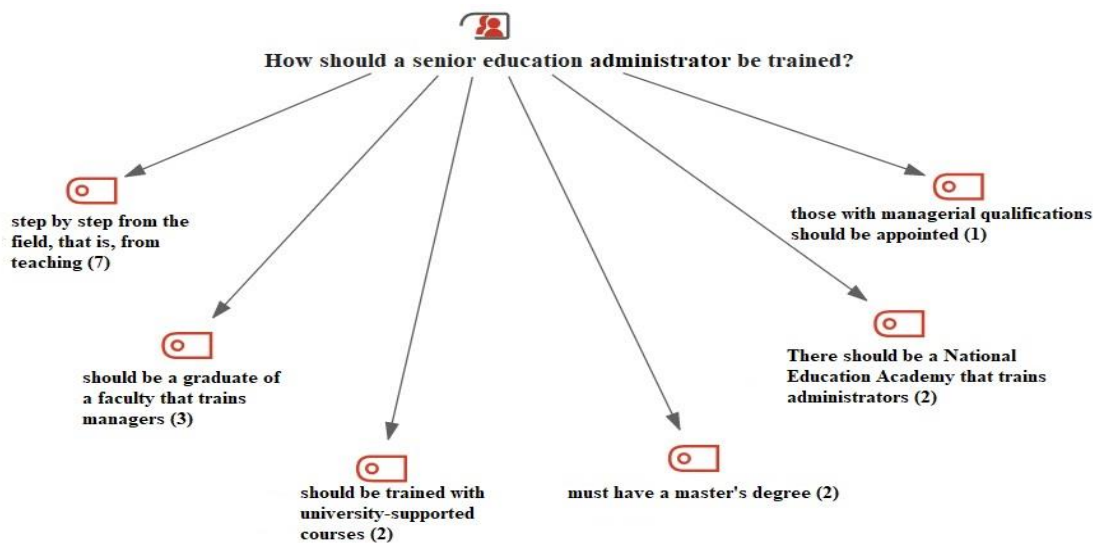


**Data 8.** In the eighth question the environmental awareness status of the senior education administrators in Çanakkale was asked. While 80% of 12 District Director of National Education in Çanakkale evaluated the issue in terms of environment and nature friendliness, the other 20% District Director of National Education examined the issue in terms of physical environment (Figure 8).



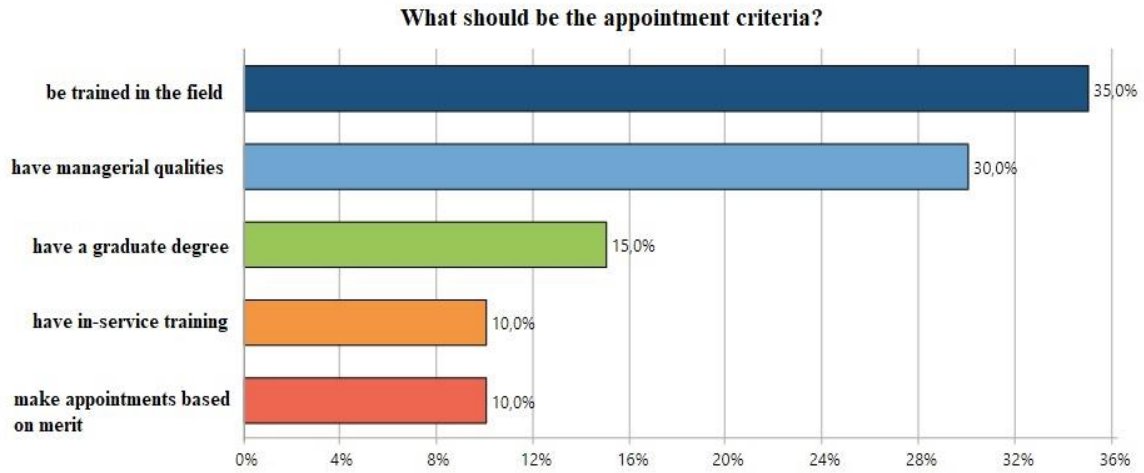
**Figure 8.** Environmental awareness characteristics of senior education administrators.

**Data 9.** In the ninth question the top level education administrators in Çanakkale were asked a question about how a senior education administrator should be trained. Senior education administrators who gave 6 different answers on the subject, mostly made a statement about "they should be trained by progressing step by step from the field in the field" (Figure 9).



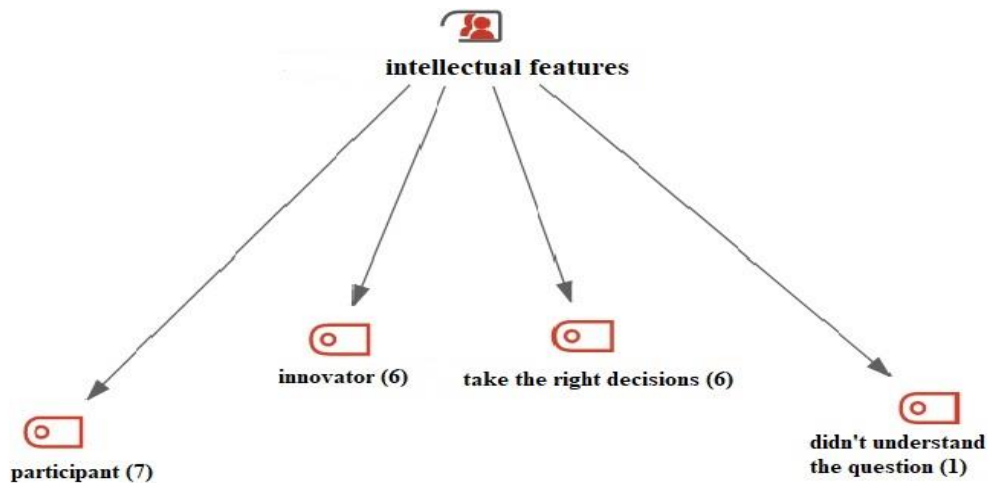
**Figure 9.** Training of senior education administrators.

**Data 10.** In the tenth question the senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked about the conditions that should be included in the appointment criteria for senior education administrators. The topics covered in particular are; it was determined as “to be trained in the field and to have managerial qualities” (Figure 10).



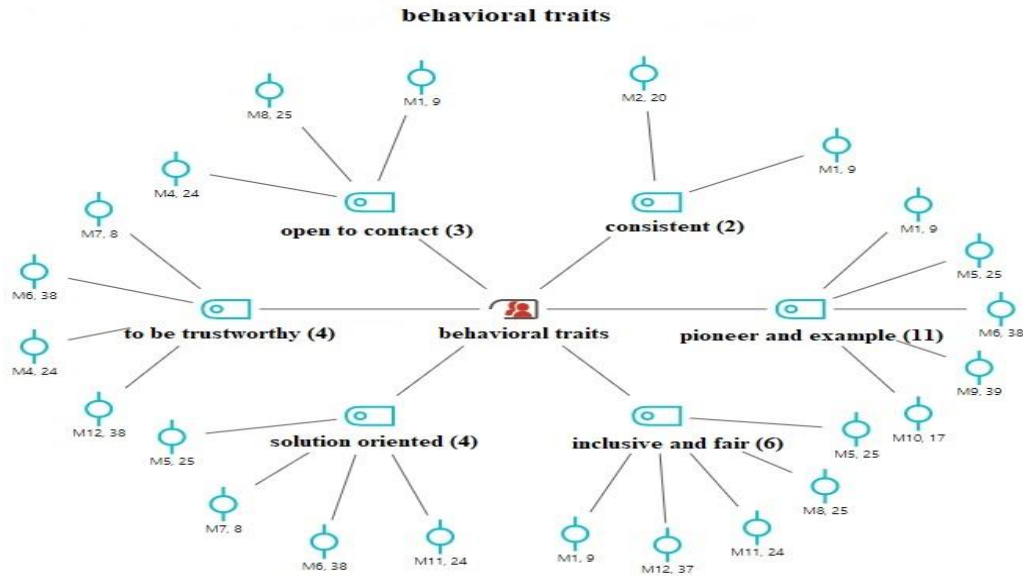
**Figure 10.** Appointment criteria to senior education administrator.

**Data 11.** In the eleventh question senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked about their intellectual characteristics. In the data obtained the concepts of participation, ability to make the right decisions and being innovative came to the fore in senior education administrators (Figure 11).



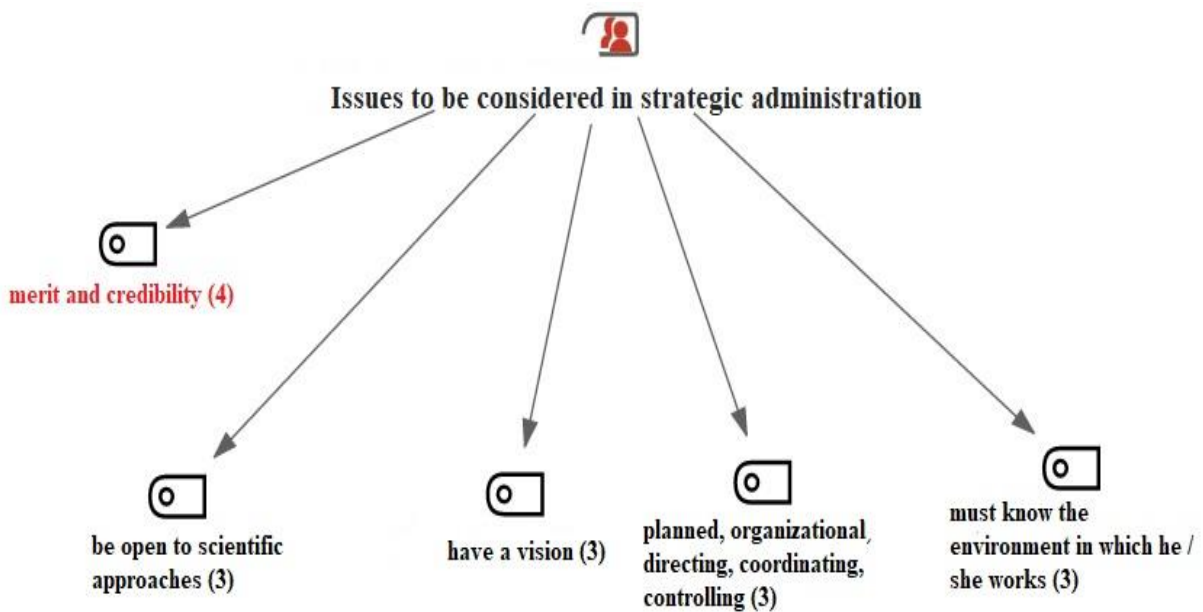
**Figure 11.** Intellectual characteristics of senior education administrators.

**Data 12.** In the twelfth question behavioral characteristics of senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked. It was stated that a pioneering and exemplary approach is the most correct approach in terms of behavioral characteristics. Many of the participants also emphasized that being inclusive and fair should be among the behavioral characteristics (Figure 12).



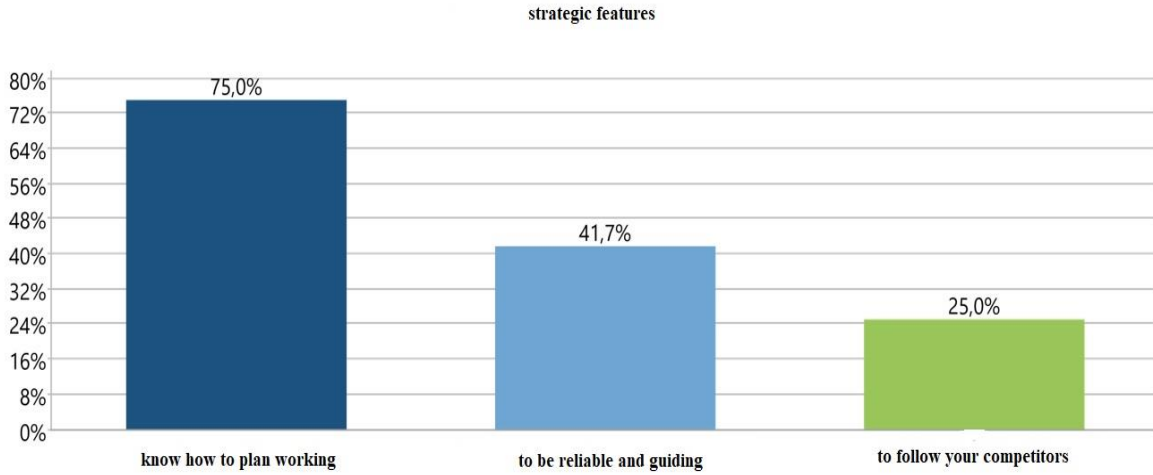
**Figure 12.** Behavioral characteristics of senior education administrators.

**Data 13.** In the thirteenth question the senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked about the issues to be considered in strategic administration. Merit and reliability were the most emphasized issues (Figure 13).



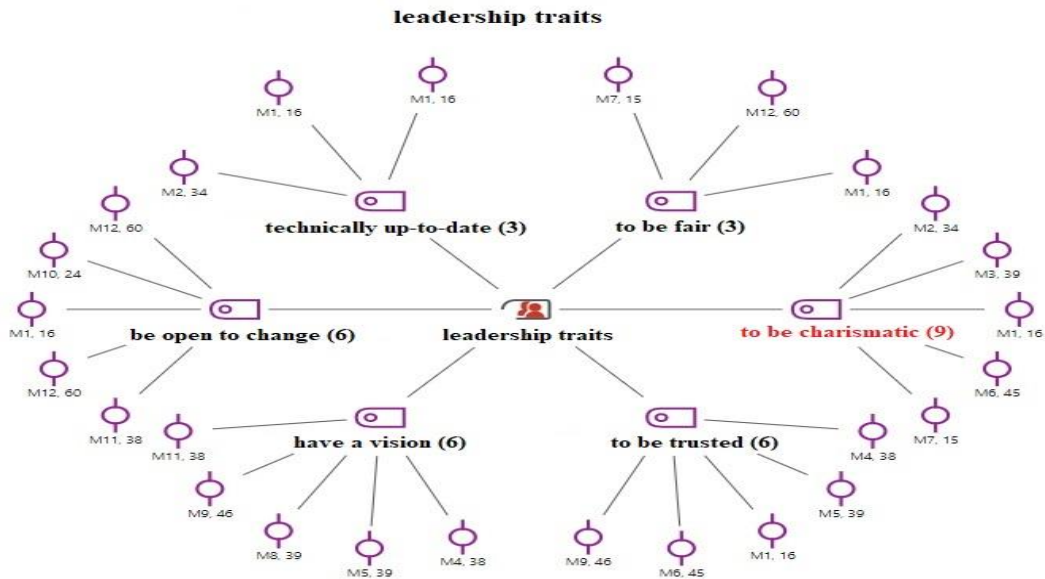
**Figure 13.** Matters to be considered in strategic administration.

**Data 14.** In the fourteenth question the strategic characteristics of the senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked. The issue of working with a plan was emphasized at the rate of 75%. Attention was also drawn to the issues of being reliable and guiding and being able to follow their competitors (Figure 14).



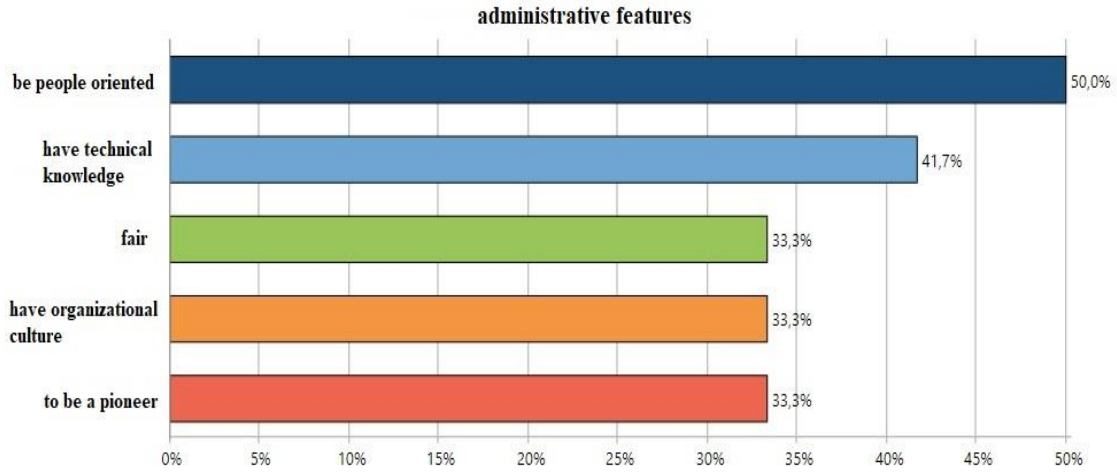
**Figure 14.** Strategic characteristics of senior education administrators.

**Data 15.** In the fifteenth question the leadership characteristics of the senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked. Being charismatic, being open to change, having a vision, being a trusted administrator came to the fore among the leadership characteristics (Figure 15).



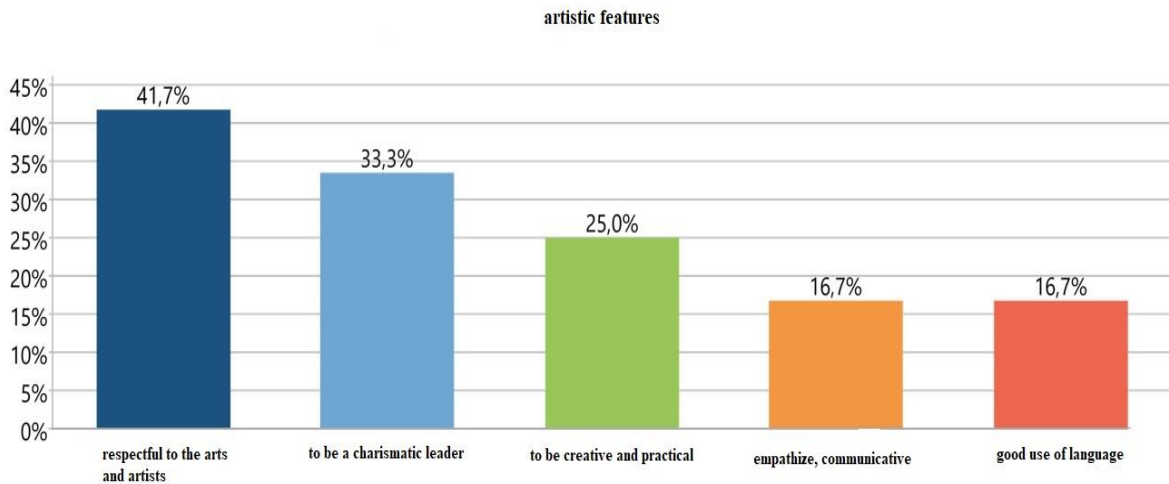
**Figure 15.** Leadership characteristics of senior education administrators.

**Data 16.** In the sixteenth question the senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked about their managerial characteristics. The subjects of being 50% human-oriented and having technical knowledge by 41.7% were brought to the fore in terms of managerial characteristics (Figure 16).



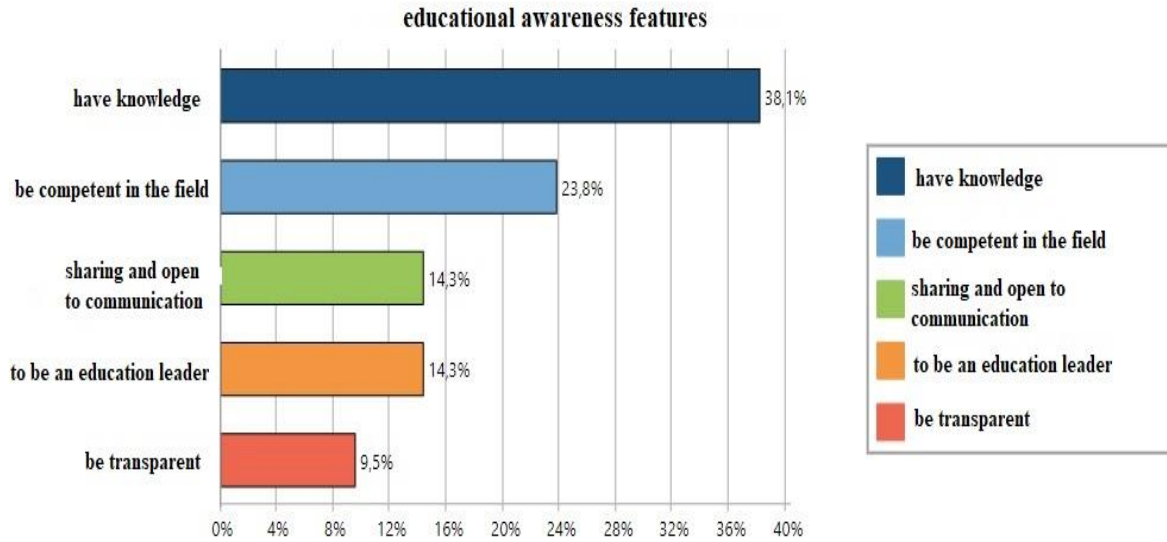
**Figure 16.** Administrative characteristics of senior education administrators.

**Data 17.** In the seventeenth question senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked about their artistic characteristics. Senior education administrators who said to be respectful to art and artists in terms of artistic characteristics and also emphasized that senior education administrators should be charismatic leaders in terms of artistic characteristics (Figure 17).



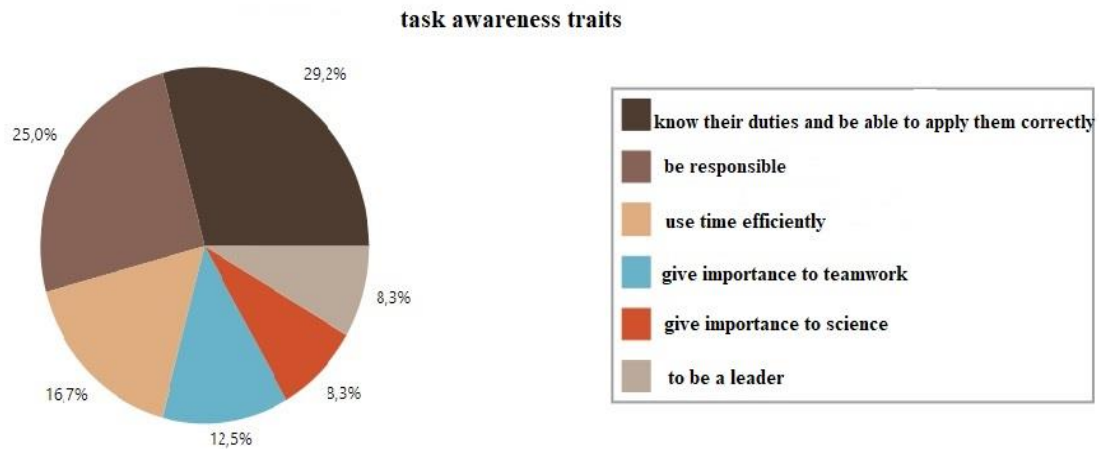
**Figure 17.** Artistic characteristics of senior education administrators.

**Data 18.** In the eighteenth question the education awareness features were asked to the senior education administrators in Çanakkale. In order of importance the subjects of having knowledge, being competent in the field, sharing and being open to communication, being an education and training leader and being transparent were determined (Figure 18).



**Figure 18.** Education awareness characteristics of senior education administrators.

**Data 19.** In the nineteenth question senior education administrators in Çanakkale were asked about their task awareness characteristics. Knowing and applying their duties correctly were determined as the most important issues in terms of task awareness characteristics of senior education administrators in Çanakkale (Figure 19).



**Figure 19.** Task consciousness characteristics of senior education administrators.

## DISCUSSION

Administrators operate amid complex transactions in a rapidly changing, globalizing world with ups and downs. The survival of organizations in these conditions largely depends on the presence of qualified administrators. Many activities, from planning how the work in the institution will be carried out, to ensuring the motivation of the personnel, are carried out by the administrators. Senior education administrators are important because they are the people who look at events from a wider perspective, determine corporate strategies and have important duties, authorities and responsibilities at the highest level in their organization.

The most important tasks and responsibilities in the success of their organization are associated with them. They are the ones who shape the national education. They are the beneficiaries of human resources, financial resources, physical resources and information. They are those who most successfully manage planning, organising, directing and controlling. They are people using with human, technical and conceptual skills. They determine the quality of educational services. They are people who determine the academic success of education, set high expectations for students and teachers, lead instructional leadership, implement collaborative and participatory management with employees, use resources and time effectively and efficiently, maintain order in schools and evaluate results well.

That's why in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there are some features that should definitely be found in senior education administrators. Senior education administrators should be able to understand and apply the globalizing and digitalizing world, be innovative and open to development. They should be able to follow the education systems and developments around the world and communicate easily with their national and international colleagues.

Among the attitudes and behaviors that stand out in the research, they should be respectful to people, idealistic and tolerant, open and brave. It is important that they are ready and willing to face the assigned tasks. It is important for senior education administrators that they are goal-oriented, determined and able to take on responsibilities.

In the digitalizing world, they should give importance to concepts such as digital reading and writing habits, willingness to learn, teach and research, and raising people, because these concepts define the educational characteristics of senior education administrators. They should believe in science and give importance to it. The mind should be one of its most important characteristics. They should be administrators who care about reason and know how to work methodically.

The research also highlights the intellectual characteristics of senior education administrators, because senior administrators who have foresight, can see the future, have vision, and can make fast and accurate decisions, play an important role in raising qualified manpower in the future.

Senior education administrators should also have artistic features. They should be creative administrators who can think abstractly and intuitively. Administrators who can manage the time in the

best way have the ability to organize, are focused on problem solving, are able to plan and are always planned, and have managerial characteristics in resource supply and management should be senior training administrators.

Since senior education administrators are the ones who determine corporate strategies, they should be reliable and principled, honest and hardworking, and have leadership qualities that can mobilize their stakeholders.

It is also an obvious aspect that administrators who do not have a love of nature and environmental awareness cannot have human love and cannot manage human resources correctly.

Senior education administrators who are knowledgeable in the information age, constantly renewing this knowledge, following scientific developments, believing that authority is knowledge, connected with the outside world and having superior communication skills are important in terms of education which is our national issue.

### **Acknowledgement**

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