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Research

Do School Administrators' Perception Management Skills Improve School Agility?[1]

Seval KOÇAK[2] **Şirin YÖRÜK**[3]

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to determine the role of school administrators' perception management skills on school agility in line with teachers' views. This research begins by recognizing the vital importance of addressing school agility. Perception management is widely regarded as a critical managerial skill for fostering positive organizational behaviors. In this context, the relationships between variables were examined and the level of prediction of perception management on school agility was determined. The research was designed in relational survey model and conducted with 346 teachers working in Uşak. Quantitative techniques were used to analyze the data collected from the participants. The findings of the study showed that the level of school administrators' perception management skills and school agility were at high levels. Additionally, it has been determined that there are positively significant relationships between school administrators' perception management skills and school agility; perception management is identified as a meaningful predictor of school agility. Recommendations based on the research findings have been provided.

Keywords: Perception, perception management, agile school, organizational agility, speed, technology, organizational flexibility.

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[2] Assoc. Prof, Uşak University, Education Faculty, Uşak, Turkiye. seval.kocak@usak.edu.tr
Orcid ID: 0000-0002-9064-2335
[3] English Language Teacher, Ministry of National Education, Uşak, Turkiye. sirin_arslan@yahoo.com
Orcid ID: 0000-0003-0062-0317

INTRODUCTION

Education systems are one of the most sensitive social systems to social, political and economic developments. This is because it is a necessity for schools to train manpower in accordance with the changing conditions and needs of all other social systems. The ability of schools to respond to changing conditions is only possible if they are equally agile in developing appropriate moves. Moreover, it is of great importance for schools to design their organizational structures with the flexibility to maneuver effectively in case of all kinds of predictable or unpredictable change. Important roles are addressed to school leaders to play in establishing these structures.

The speed at which information is shared has gained great momentum due to globalization and rapid change in technology, and the speed at which schools can adapt this information to their education and training processes, human and material resources has become an important criterion in their preference. Although schools in Turkey are trying to renew themselves, the centralized structure of the Turkish National Education System and some legal restrictions may restrict school's activities at the local level (Çelikten, Ayyıldız & Çelikten, 2019). However, the slow flow of bureaucratic work in schools, paperwork and bureaucratic obstacles that increase the workload impose restrictions on the mobility of school leaders. (Keman, 2019). Along with these problems, the fact that schools still maintain the characteristics of the classical managerial tradition of the industrial revolution also has a retarding effect on their agility (Cummings & Worley, 2008). On the other hand, the survival of schools in the ecosystem is closely linked to their competitiveness (Koçak, 2021). Today, the competitiveness of schools is determined by their ability to continually update themselves in the face of changing conditions, to maneuver quickly and wisely thanks to their flexible structure, and to use technology effectively (Kaya & Özdemir, 2022). An agile school is an educational institution that prioritizes flexibility and adaptability. An agile school can respond to rapidly changing conditions and teachers and student needs. As Atmaca (2021) stated in her study, school agility was found to be a significant predictor of school effectiveness. According to Osoli (2007), agile organizations possess a profound comprehension and readiness to adjust to cahnges that extend beyond fleeting opportunities. Their innovative approaches and specialized knowledge enable them to secure a steadfast position." In this context, agile organizational characteristics that can change human and material resources at the same speed and use them wisely in the face of rapidly changing conditions have become very critical. Otherwise, it does not seem possible for school organizations to keep their existence effectively.

A limited number of studies related to school agility were found in the literature, and in one of these studies, school agility was found to be a significant predictor of school effectiveness. (Atmaca, 2021). In a study conducted at the higher education level, the organizational agility perceptions of academic and administrative staff were described (Gözcü, 2020; Öksüz-Gül, 2020). In another study, a school agility scale was developed

(Kaya & Özdemir, 2022). Apart from these studies, there is no empirical study on educational organizations. It is thought that organizational agility is a very important feature for schools trying to exist in a continuous and rapid change, and therefore, studies related to school agility should be increased.

Empirical studies on businesses other than educational organizations point to the importance of organizational agility in all social systems and show that it is an organizational characteristic that can be developed through leadership styles. For example, in one of the studies conducted on businesses, it was revealed that organizational agility increases organizational commitment and has a negative relationship with intend to quit job (Tarakçı, 2021). The related research shows that organizational agility provides positive consequences to the organization. However, there are also studies showing that leadership styles and the perception of the leader as a leader play an important role in organizational agility (Güneş, 2021; Özeroğlu, 2019). Ateşoğlu (2023) concluded in his study that positive leadership behaviors improve organizational agility through increasing intrapreneurship, while negative leadership behaviors have a negative effect. In another study, it was concluded that employee empowerment, which is one of the important leadership behaviors, contributes significantly to organizational agility (Seyrani-Aktan, 2023). These results indicate that organizational agility can be improved through leadership practices.

The starting point of this research is the necessity of addressing school agility, which is of great importance for school organizations to compete and, more importantly, to achieve the desired outcomes in the national and international arena. In addition, it was thought that the study could provide a new perspective on how school agility can be improved through leadership practices and give school administrators an idea on this issue. Considering that it is important to be able to influence the ideas, thoughts, attitudes and behaviors of employees in the development of school agility, it is predicted that the perception management skills expected from today's school leaders can play an important role in school agility. As a matter of fact, according to Çoban (2019), perception management is seen as a very important managerial skill in terms of creating positive organizational behaviors. Moreover, there is no study examining the relationship between perception management and school agility.

In this context, the aim of this study is to determine what role school administrators' perception management skills play on school agility in line with teachers' views. Within the framework of this purpose, answers were sought to the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between level of school administrators' perception management skills and school agility?
- Is there a significant relationship between school administrators' perception management skills and school agility?

- Are school administrators' perception management skills a significant predictor of school agility?

Within the framework of the related purpose, the relationships between the variables were examined and the level of prediction of perception management on school agility was determined.

Conceptual Framework

Organizational Agility and Agile Schools

Due to the rapid and unpredictable changes in social, economic and political life, the survival of organizations has become dependent on their ability to maneuver in the face of these changes. One of the requirements of organizational effectiveness has been the ability to adapt rapidly to changing conditions and to use material and human resources in this direction. In this regard, Kumkale (2016) stated that the survival and sustainability of today's organizations depends on their ability to quickly grasp the change and implement it faster than their competitors. The term "agility" was first mentioned in 1982 in a business context as "the capacity to accomplish something." Brown and Agnew (1982) described agility as "the ability to quickly respond to rapidly changing conditions. This concept, referred to as *organizational agility*, is associated by Maskell (2001) with the capacity to have flexible structure and human resources to respond to rapidly changing conditions and unforeseen requirements in the most effective way and to integrate change rapidly into organizational processes. In another definition, *organizational agility* is explained as being agile; being flexible in a way that makes adaptation easier, following a standardized process of learning from possible error situations, being open to new ideas and different opinions, and easily adapting to innovations (Çapan, 2019). Chonko and Jones (2005) explained the indicators of organizational agility with flexibility in organizational structure, employee skills, use of technology, openness to innovation and knowledge management processes.

It is also seen in the literature that organizational agility is associated with evaluating change as an opportunity and using it for organizational development (Dahmardeh & Banihashemi, 2010) and having comprehensive methods to implement and benefit from change (Maskell, 2001). However, considering that environmental changes will not always occur with fixed categories, it is stated that agile organizations have an organizational and managerial structure that can adapt itself to each new situation again and again (Segal, 1974). In this context, it is emphasized that organizational agility can be achieved through the coordinated work of three resources consisting of human resources, technology use and management/organizational structure of the organization (Nagel & Dove, 1991).

The concept of organizational agility generally focuses on three main areas: flexibility, speed and technology. (Kaya & Özdemir, 2022). Among these characteristics, flexibility is

explained as the ability to adapt to environmental changes and to adapt the organizational structure to these conditions (İleri & Soylu, 2010). In addition, abilities such as having and using alternative resources, finding solutions to problems in different ways, being open to different views and ways of doing business, and being able to develop and change the organization's routine practices and methods are also associated with flexibility (Akkaya & Tabak, 2020). In this context, it is possible to say that it is possible to give up traditional methods, to choose functional ways that are suitable for the conditions of the day and to solve the problems, with a flexible structure instead of rigid rules and hierarchical structure. Indeed, (Denning, 2015) states that offering new experiences to stakeholders and meeting current needs is not possible with a hierarchical bureaucracy. Another important factor for organizations is *speed*. It is a concept related to the response time of organizations to change and demands. Sharifi and Zhang (2000) defined speed as one of the most important elements of agility and defined it as the ability of organizations to perform their tasks and operations in the shortest possible time. In this context, they emphasized that organizations should provide the desired service or product quickly, deliver it to stakeholders in a short time, and that high quality products or services should generally go through a fast transaction process. The last concept that can be emphasized as components of organizational agility *is technology*. The fact that their organizations have high-level information technologies and the capabilities to use these technologies provides them with agility and contributes significantly to their competitiveness. In this regard, Yeganegi and Azar (2012) stated that organizations can facilitate their work, accelerate data and information sharing, improve organizational learning, provide fast and easy communication with stakeholders, and briefly improve their organizational agility by using flexible software and programs thanks to information technologies. As a matter of fact, Chen and Siau (2012) state that it is not possible to respond quickly to change demands without information technology infrastructure and that information technologies are of great importance in order to create an agile organization. When all these characteristics are considered as a whole, it can be said that managers of organisations have important roles in increasing the agility of the organization and should show motivating leadership behaviors in this regard. The ability of individual organizational employees to show agile behaviors within the framework of their duties, to be open to change, to change the methods they use, to use technology effectively and to update service quality in line with stakeholder demands seems to be related to how leaders influence them in this regard.

Based on the concept of organizational agility, agile schools are open to innovative ideas, make learning a passion with inclusive and democratic leaders, focus on professional development, and create a shared vision. In agile schools, communication is strong, it is a passion to inspire and bring about change in the school. Leaders in agile schools are aware of the needs of all stakeholders and respect those with different perspectives (Cooper, 2012). As a matter of fact, in the current rapid change process, it seems possible for schools to

develop with agile leaders who support the strengthening of organizational agility (Breakspear, 2016).

Perception Management

Perception is defined as a process in which information coming from the environment through the senses is selected, brought together, organized, interpreted and made meaningful in itself. (Eren, 2008). Perception management is seen as a kind of information warfare; it is defined as influencing the feelings, thoughts and behaviors of the target group (Spaiser 2008). It is defined also as the ability to turn the process in favor of the organization by meeting the needs of people and ensuring their motivation and job satisfaction in their profession or the work to be done (Uğurlu, 2008). In this context, perception management aims to regulate the way employees understand and interpret the external world in a way that contributes to the achievement of organizational goals. In this way, it is ensured that the ideas and behaviors of employees are developed in a way that contributes to organizational effectiveness (Özdağ, 2018). Moreover, with perception management, undesirable organizational behaviors can be prevented (Korkmazyürek ve Hazır, 2014). In order to achieve these goals and create positive perceptions, it is important to use motivational resources (Atalay, 2016). In addition, school administrators are expected to be effective in *emotional management*, which is related to perception management, in order to develop positive organizational behaviors. (Argon, 2015).

Perception management carried out in line with organizational goals and on the basis of ethical principles provides significant benefits to the organization. As a matter of fact, Otara (2011) states that organizational climate and effectiveness are largely shaped by the perceptions of employees, so perception management should be taken into account by managers. In this regard, Akıllı (2022) emphasizes that positive perceptions positively affect organizational processes, while negative perceptions negatively affect the organizational climate. Moreover, it is pointed out that perception management is important for the competitiveness and effectiveness of organizations (Bakan ve Kefe, 2012; Yörük ve Summak, 2016). For this reason, it is very important for school leaders to realize effective perception management skills in order to increase teacher performance and voluntary participation in educational and management processes in the school. In the study conducted by Konan and Çavuşoğlu (2018), they stated that the formation and continuity of general positive perceptions within the school is largely dependent on the school leader and that teacher performance can be improved through positive perceptions of both the school leader and the school. Botha (2013) emphasized that perception management in schools is a necessary leadership skill; only leaders with this skill can have an impact on school stakeholders.

In the process of perception management, there are certain processes that leaders should follow and tools that can carry out these processes. In their scale development study, Uylas and Argon (2020) addressed perception management processes with the stages of "determining the current perception", "creating and influencing impressions" and "creating

and directing perception". In this context, clearly identifying the current ideas and thoughts of employees, motivating individuals by creating a positive impression, and creating a positive perception by presenting reasonable evidence, persuading and convincing are considered as important steps of the perception management process. However, Eren (2008) mentioned some points to be considered about perception while conducting this process. One of them is that the perception process is influenced by the individual characteristics of the perceiver. Therefore, it is important for managers to operate perception management processes in accordance with individual differences. The other is that the characteristics of the perceived thing (person, event, phenomenon, etc.) and the environment in which the perception process takes place are effective in shaping this process. Based on this, it can be said that the characteristics of the teachers, what the perceived thing means to the teacher and the school environment (school climate and culture, school leader's management style and perception management skills, etc.) where the perception process takes place are very important for the formation of positive perceptions at school.

METHOD

This study, which examined the relationships between school administrators' perception management skills and school agility, was designed in the relational survey model. The relational survey model is used to reveal the relationship or effect between two different quantitative variables (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Quantitative techniques were used to analyze the data collected from the participants. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to determine teachers' and school administrators' perceptions of perception management skills and school agility. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to identify the relationships between variables. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictiveness of perception management on school agility.

The Study Group

This research, which examines the relationships between perception management and school agility, was conducted with teachers working in primary and secondary schools in Uşak province. In this study, the focus was on the relationships between variables. There is no intention of generalizing to the population. Therefore, a specific study group was determined for the research. In this framework, the study group consisted of 346 teachers. Table 1 provides descriptive information about the study group.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the study group

			f	%
Gender	Female		182	52.6
	Male		164	47.4
School Level	Primary/	Sec.	217	62.7
	High School		129	37.3

Senority	1-15 years	149	43.1
	16 years and over	197	56.9
Level of Education	Bachelor's Degree	258	74.6
	Master's Degree	88	25.4
Number of Teachers in School	1-20 teachers	90	26.0
	21 teachers and	256	74.0
Toplam	346		

As seen in Table 1, 46.4% of the 407 teachers who constitute the study group of the research are female and 53.6% are male. Among these teachers, 298 of them work in primary education and 109 of them work in secondary education institutions. Of the participant teachers, 203 had 1-10 years of seniority and 204 had 11 years or more.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, "Perception Management Scale" developed by Uylas and Argon (2020) was used to determine teachers' views on school administrators' perception management skills. In determining the agility levels of schools, the "Agile School Scale" developed by Kaya and Özdemir (2022) was utilized. The psychometric properties of the instruments are presented below.

Perception Management Scale (PMS): The scale used to reveal the perception management skills of school administrators consists of 16 items and three dimensions. The three dimensions of the five-point Likert-type scale are named as "*determining current perception, creating and influencing impression, creating perception and directing perception*". As a result of the exploratory factor (EFA) analysis conducted during the development of the scale, it was concluded that the three-dimensional structure explained 55.99% of the variance. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results were [χ2/df =2.89 (p>05); CFI= .96; IFI=.96; RMSEA=0.08]. The Cronbach Alpha coefficients calculated for the reliability of the scale were .88 for the "*determining the current perception*" dimension, .75 for the "c*reating and influencing impressions*" dimension, .73 for the "*creating and directing perception*" dimension and .88 for the whole scale. Considering the values, it was concluded that the scale is a valid and reliable instrument (Uylas & Argon, 2020). In this study, the validity and reliability analyses of the scale were performed and the results of the CFA were [χ2/df =2.81 (p>05); CFI= .99; IFI=.99; RMSEA=0.07]; the reliability coefficient was calculated as .92 for the dimension of "*determining the current perception*", .89 for the dimension of "*creating and influencing impressions*", .88 for the dimension of "*creating and directing perception*" and .95 for the whole scale. The related values showed that the scale is a valid and reliable instrument that can be used in this study (Kline, 2011).

Agile School Scale (ASS): The Agile School Scale, which is used to determine the agility levels of schools, is a 21-item, three-dimensional scale labeled as *"flexibility, technology and speed"*. As a result of the EFA conducted during the development of the scale, it was determined that the variance explained by the three-dimensional structure was 64%. The

CFA values for the validation of the construct were reported as [χ2/df =2.33 (p>05); CFI= .99; IFI=.97; RMSEA=0.08]. The reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .95 (Kaya & Özdemir, 2022). The results of the CFA conducted to determine whether the scale is a valid and reliable instrument in this study were calculated as [χ2/df =3.25 (p>05); CFI= .98; IFI=.98; RMSEA=0.08]. The Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the scale were. 89 for the "flexibility" dimension, .90 for the "*technology*" dimension, .86 for the "*speed*" dimension and .95 for the whole scale.

Data Collection and Analysis

This research was conducted with 346 teachers working in primary and secondary education institutions in Uşak province and data were collected on a voluntary basis. Necessary permissions were obtained from Uşak Provincial Directorate of National Education for data collection. In order to prepare the data for analysis, missing data controls and extreme value analyses were performed. Confirmatory factor analyses were performed to determine whether the scales were valid and reliable for this study, and Cronbach Alpha coefficients were calculated. To determine whether the data were normally distributed, kurtosis and skewness coefficients were evaluated and normal distribution curves were analyzed. Since the kurtosis and skewness coefficients were between -1 and +1, it was decided that the data showed a normal distribution. In line with the purpose of the study, arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of the variables were first calculated. Pearson correlation coefficients were used to determine the relationships between school administrators' perception management skills and school agility; regression analysis was used to determine the role of school administrators' perception management skills on school agility. In the first step of the regression analysis, control variables coded as dummy variables were added and in the next step, perception management was included in the analysis. In the interpretation of arithmetic averages, score ranges of 1.00- 1.79 (*very low*); 1.80-2.59 (*low*); 2.60-3.39 *(medium*); 3.40-4.19 (*high*); 4.20- 5.00 (very high) were used.

FINDINGS

Depending on the first research question, arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of school administrators' perception management skills and school agility variables were calculated. Related values are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of variables

	(X̄)	*Ss*
Perception Management Total	**3.58**	**.81093**
Determination of current perception	3.62	.94123
Creating and influencing impressions	3.59	.88071
Creating and directing perception	3.54	.81830
School Agility Total	**3.90**	**.57695**
Flexibility	3.91	.60733

Technology	3.97	.62449
Speed	3.83	.65558

As seen in Table 2, teachers' opinions show that the total mean value of school administrators' perception management skills is $\bar{X}$=3.58, and the mean values of the dimensions vary between 3.54 and 3.62. The averages of school agility show that the total mean value is $\bar{X}$=3.90 and the averages of the dimensions vary between 3.83 and 3.97.

Secondly, the relationships between school administrators' perception management skills and school agility were determined. Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients between the related variables and their dimensions.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients for the relationships between perception management and agile school

	School Agility	***Flexibility***	***Technology***	***Speed***
School Agility Total	,667**	,642**	,568**	,621**
Determination of current perception	,647**	,634**	,559**	,577**
Creating and influencing	,593**	,574**	,507**	,545**
Creating and directing perception	,611**	,574**	,510**	,597**

N=346, **p* < .01

As seen in Table 3, the correlation coefficients indicate that there is a positive, medium-level significant relationship between perception management and school agility. In this context, it is seen that the highest relationship between the dimensions of school agility and general perception management belongs to the "flexibility" dimension (rayt x e = .642; p < .01), followed by "speed" (rayt x h = .621; p < .01) and "technology" (rayt x t = .568; p < .01) dimensions respectively.

Based on the last research question of the study, the results of the regression analysis conducted to determine the role of perception management on school agility are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Regression analysis results for the prediction of school agility

	β	t	R^2	ΔR^2
			,026	-
Gender	,122	2,196*		
Seniority	,054	,952		
Level of Education	-,047	-,849		
School Level	-,073	-1,253		
Number of	,004	,075*		
			R^2	ΔR^2
			,468	,442
Perception Man.	,676	16,774*		

*p<.05

As seen in Table 4, in the first step of the regression analysis, control variables coded as dummy variables (gender, seniority, education level, school level and number of teachers in the school) were included in the analysis. Among these variables, gender explained 2.6% of the variability in agile schools (*F= 1.787, p<0.05)*. Accordingly, it was found that male teachers' perceptions of agile schools tended to be high. In the second step of the analysis, perception management was included in the analysis and it was determined that this variable was a significant predictor of the perception of agile school. In this context, it was determined that perception management alone explained 44.2% of the variance on agile school (ΔR2= .442, p<0.05). In general, it was determined that control variables and perception management together explained 46.8% of the variance in agile school (*F= 49.613, p<0.05)*.

Ethical considerations

In the course of this research, we paid scrupulous attention to ethical guidelines, ensuring that the integrity and reliability of the study were never compromised.

In alignment with the overarching commitment to ethics, this study stringently adhered to all provisions delineated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive." It is imperative to note that there were zero instances of activities which might infringe upon the clauses stated under the "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics."

Ethical Review Board: Uşak University Social Sciences and Humanities, Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee

Date of Ethics Review Decision: 09.05.2024

Ethics Assessment Document Issue Number: 2024-113

DISCUSSION

In this study, the role of school administrators' perception management skills on school agility was determined. In this context, firstly, school administrators' perception management skills and school agility levels were determined and then the relationships between variables were examined.

Based on the first research question of the study, descriptive statistics of the variables were determined. The total mean of school administrators' perception management skills was found to be in the "always" range. As a matter of fact, in other studies conducted on the use of perception management by school principals according to teachers' views, it was observed that the general average of perception management was in the same range as this study (Atalay, 2016; Çoban, 2019; Uylas, 2017). In this context, it indicates that school administrators are successful in perception management, but on the other hand, there are some points that need to be improved.

Another remarkable finding regarding perception management is the ranking of dimension averages. As a result of the analyses, it was observed that the averages of the sub-dimensions were, from largest to smallest, *determining the current perception, creating and influencing impressions, creating perception and directing perception*. In other studies in which teachers' views were determined, it was observed that school administrators had higher averages in the skills for determining the current perception compared to other dimensions (Çoban, 2019; Uylas, 2017). In this context, it can be said that school administrators are more effective in determining the perception in the first step of the perception management process than in influencing and perception formation steps. However, it is emphasized that the perception management process is -strategically- shaping perceptions for the benefit of the organization (Spaiser 2008; Özdağ, 2018). Therefore, it is possible to say that it is necessary but not sufficient to effectively identify existing perceptions in the perception management process. In this regard, Elsbach (2003) underlines that in order to understand the nature of organizational perception management, it is necessary to know all the elements of the whole organization, that organizational perception management is different from individual perception management, and that knowing the conditions is only one of the components of organizational perception management. For this reason, the achievement of the objectives of perception management seems to depend on the success in all the steps of determining the current perception, creating and influencing impressions, creating perception and directing perception within the scope of perception management (Uylas & Argon, 2020). The overall average of school agility, which is the dependent variable of the study, was found to be high. In a study conducted by Atmaca (2021), teachers' views on the level of school agility are similar to the findings of this study. In addition, similar results were found in university-level research on organizational agility (Gözcü, 2020; Öksüz – Gül, 2021). These results generally indicate that educational institutions have a certain level of

awareness about organizational agility. Moreover, in today's world, where it is imperative to adapt to changes in an unpredictable life process, it is possible to say that it has already become a necessity for organizations to show agile characteristics.

Breakspear (2016) sees agile school characteristics as an important need for improving teaching-learning processes in the complex structures of today's schools. Dahmardeh and Banihashemin (2010) state that it is important for social systems to have flexible, fast and lean production structures that can cater to the changing and rapidly demanding business world in terms of their competitiveness and continuity. Therefore, the continuity of today's educational institutions seems to depend on keeping themselves up to date in terms of managerial, human and material resources as well as all educational processes. For this reason, it is actually expected that educational institutions show agile organization characteristics at a high level. However, the fact that the averages are in the high level range shows that there are points that need to be improved in school agility. It is thought that it is very important for educational institutions to carry the characteristics of agile organizations at the highest level due to their duty to train qualified manpower for other social systems and their important role in the socio-economic development of countries.

Another remarkable finding obtained as a result of the analysis on school agility is the averages of the dimensions of organizational agility. It was determined that these averages were ranked as technology, *flexibility* and *speed* from large to small. In this context, it has been observed that schools have lower perceptions of organizational speed than other agility dimensions and that the speed dimension is lower than the general average of organizational agility. In other words, schools think that they have organizational speed characteristics at a lower level than other agility characteristics. This can be explained by the bureaucratic structure of the Turkish National Education System. As a matter of fact, there is a hierarchical correspondence system for all kinds of work and transactions carried out in schools, such as applications, requesting information, giving information or receiving information. According to Çelikten, Ayyıldız, and Çelikten (2019), this centralized structure, some legal limitations within the structure, or the limited authority of school leaders can slow down their activities at the local level. The slow progress of bureaucratic works, bureaucratic obstacles encountered in some practices, and more importantly, the heavy paperwork required by the bureaucratic structure can limit leaders (Keman, 2019). All of these reasons may be hindering the speed of the organization's employees in particular and the organization as a whole in general, and may create various problems in reacting quickly.

Based on the second and third research question of the study, the relationships between variables were examined. In this context, it was observed that there were significant positive relationships between school administrators' perception management skills and schools' use of technology, flexible behaviors and organizational agility. The results of the regression analysis also showed that school administrators' perception management skills were a significant predictor of school agility. In this context, flexible behaviors, speed and tendencies of organizational employees towards the use of technology seem to depend on

the success of school leaders in perception management. As a matter of fact, it is stated that school administrators who can perform effective perception management can have an impact on all stakeholders of the school (Botha, 2013). In addition, it is stated that through successful perception management at school, teachers may become willing to spend more effort for school goals; thus, the effectiveness and efficiency of the school may increase (Konan & Çavuşoğlu, 2018). In other studies conducted on the basis of different businesses, it is also emphasized that successful perception management is a very important managerial skill in organizational effectiveness, quality of organizational functioning, and gaining the interest and satisfaction of other stakeholders (Hargis & Watt, 2010; Stupak, 2001; Johanson & Xiong, 2003). The fact that perception management is a significant predictor of school agility in this study can be interpreted as perception management is an effective tool in motivating teachers to use the skills required for agile schools. In other words, it is possible to say that school leaders can motivate teachers to show qualified and fast reactions, to be flexible towards different, current and new practices, and to use technology effectively through effective perception management.

The fact that school administrators' perception management skills predict agile school characteristics indicates the importance of perception management on teacher performance. However, an important element draws attention here. Effective perception management is possible only if school administrators know the direction of teachers' perceptions, accept that teachers' perceptions are different from each other and implement perception management that takes individual differences into account. Only in this way will teachers be motivated in the desired direction. In this regard, Otara (2011) states that in the process of perception management, managers should accept that individuals have different perceptions and use stimuli that respond to individual needs. Uğurlu (2008), on the other hand, emphasizes that if individuals are to work in line with organizational goals through perception management, the unique needs of employees should be considered and met. Based on these statements, it can be said that a school administrator who wants to create an agile school should take into account the individual needs and feelings of teachers in a perception management process. Argon (2015) studied "management of emotions" in schools, which is closely related to perception management, and determined whether school administrators take teachers' emotions into consideration or not. As a result of the research, it was emphasized that school administrators have deficiencies in taking teachers' emotions into consideration. However, it has been observed that teachers whose feelings are not taken into consideration tend to exhibit negative behaviors; behaviors such as "unhappiness, feeling worthless, slowing down the work, distrusting the administrator and the institution, decreasing school success and being confrontational" have emerged. In this context, taking emotions into account, understanding them and transforming them into positive emotions and perceptions in the desired direction is of great importance in terms of increasing teacher performance. More specifically, improving teacher performance in schools in a way to create

agile schools and ensuring that teachers are flexible, open to innovations, fast and qualified in their work seems to depend on the perception management skills of leaders.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the relationships between school administrators' perception management skills and agile school characteristics were examined, and the general conclusion was reached that perception management plays an enhancing role on school agility. More specifically, successful perception management has been found to improve organizational agility, one of the most important capabilities for schools in today's rapidly changing world. Accordingly, with a successful perception management conducted by the school administrator, teachers become more willing to exhibit the skills of agile school dimensions. In this context, teachers' willingness to use their skills related to using technology, being flexible in the face of innovations and changes, and responding quickly to stimuli depends on the perception management skills of school administrators.

Based on the related results, it is recommended that school administrators improve their perception management skills. In this context, school administrators should act in accordance with individual differences in the processes of determining the current perceptions of teachers, creating a positive impression, shaping the desired perception and directing the perception. For this reason, school administrators can be provided with trainings on this subject. In addition, technological infrastructure can be provided to support the development of agile school characteristics and schools can be equipped in this respect. Similarly, it is very important but insufficient for teachers to create a positive perception of their use of technology. For this reason, need-oriented trainings can be provided to improve teachers' skills in this area.

In this study, the perception management variable, which is thought to play an important role in the development of agile school characteristics, was studied. In future studies, research can be conducted on the issues related to which other managerial and physical conditions can improve agile school characteristics. Similarly, qualitative methods like interviews, focus groups and case studies can be conducted to reveal the important factors in the development of agile school characteristics and they can provide a profound insights into the details of perception management practices and their effects on school agility. Looking at how different cultures handle perception management and how schoold adapt to change can give a wider understanding. By studying these topics across cultures, it can be effective to find specific problems that schools faces and the most effective ways to address them. In this study, no comparison was made between school levels; the aim was to reveal the general appearance of public schools. In this context, future researches can be designed to uncover differences at the school level would contribute to the field.

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Data Availability Declaration

Data Availability Upon Formal Request:

While the primary datasets utilized in this study are not publicly accessible due to certain constraints, they are available to researchers upon a formal request. The authors have emphasized maintaining the integrity of the data and its analytical rigor. To access the datasets or seek further clarifications, kindly reach out to the corresponding author. Our aim is to foster collaborative academic efforts while upholding the highest standards of research integrity.

Author Contributions

All authors, Koçak and Yörük contributed equally to this work. They collaboratively handled the conceptualization, methodology design, data acquisition, and analysis. Each author played a significant role in drafting and revising the manuscript, ensuring its intellectual depth and coherence. All authors have thoroughly reviewed, provided critical feedback, and approved the final version of the manuscript. They jointly take responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the research.

Author(s)' statements on ethics and conflict of interest
Ethics statement: We hereby declare that research/publication ethics and citing principles have been considered in all the stages of the study. We take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of dispute.
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Biographical notes:

Seval Koçak 1[4]*:* She received her master's degree in 2012 and his PhD degree in 2016 from Hacettepe University. Between 2016 and 2019, she worked as a research assistant at Usak University; she worked as an assistant professor in 2019. Dr. Koçak continues to work as an associate professor at Usak University.

Scopus Author Identifier Number: 56585607300

Web of Science Researcher ID: JHH-0559-2023

Şirin YÖRÜK 2: She graduated from English Language Teaching Department at Marmara University and received her master's degree from Uşak University in 2021. She is currently working as an English teacher at Uşak Provincial Directorate of National Education and she is also a PhD student in the Management of Education Programme at Pamukkale University."

[4] Corresponding Author