

The Level of Ability to Adopt and Apply Organizational Democracy to Primary Schools According to Perceptions of Teachers and Administrators

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Abstract

In this study, the level of ability to adopt and apply organizational democracy by teachers and administrators in primary schools are examined. The primary schools in Van have been classified in terms of sub, mid and upper socio-economic levels and 486 teachers and 71 administrators who work at the public primary schools which are randomly chosen have been taken to the sample. In this study, the "Organizational Democracy Scale" which was prepared by Şeker was used as data collection tool. The data were interpreted by using SPSS software. Non-parametric tests were applied due to the non-normal distribution according to the Kolmogorov-Sminov Test which has been examined over total score. In variables consisting two categories Mann Whitney-U test, in variables consisting more than two categories Kuruskal test and for determination of differences between variables, Mann Whitney-U test was used. As a result of study, it has been concluded that managers and teachers in primary schools have adopted organizational democracy but have reasonable view about practicability of organizational democracy.

Key Words

Democracy, Organizational Democracy, Localization, Subsidiarity, Agree with the Decision.

As a significant concept for the success of social organizations (Prah, 2007), democracy has gained more importance in the current century because of the vast and rapid changes (Erdoğan, 2002). In democracy, equality before the law, and opposing views and thoughts could also be existed besides freedom of thought and faith (Sönmez, 2008). In the historical development of democracy, the European community has witnessed feudal system, absolute monarchy and parliamentary system, respectively (Ertan, 2009). As for Turkey, footprints

of democracy appeared during Charter of Alliance in the beginnings of 1800s and followed with the Turkish Constitution of 1961 (Uygun, 1996). In the 21st century, the concept of democracy has begun to change (Kabasakal, 2002). Those changes have also been effective in the public field. The traditional public administration was considered to be inadequate (Haktankaçmaz, 2008) and democratic mechanisms are suggested as a need for performances of services in public life (Saran, 1998). Such suggestions have been ranked in the education services as one of those ones.

Intended results have not been reached yet despite the reforms in education services in Turkey. The most significant reasons could be stipulated as; centralized authorities, frequent changes in top managements (Atasayar, 2005), lack of participation as the basis of democracy (Beyazıt, 2006) and non-execution of the subsidiarity which causes changes in many aspects on organizations and becomes an essential part of management (Ergül, 2006).

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These issues point some basic necessities such as centralization versus localization, centralization versus decentralization, participation in decision instead of centralized authorities, and subsidiarity. It is possible to apply these evolutions only when organizational democracy required in organizational operations (Vredenburg & Brender, 1993), is practiced in institutions (Şeker, 2010).

Organizational democracy stands for agreement with participation of members in a collective organization or in phases of management (Yazdani, 2009). In other words, it contains that seniors should share their authorities with the juniors, key partners must be included during the decision making and these employees must be authorized in order to provide them a more convenient atmosphere for their works (cited in Korman, 1977; Başaran, 1998). Namely it will be possible with localization, subsidiarity and all workers' participation to the decision.

Localization means the transference of administrative authorities owned by the management into other organizations (Mahmutoğlu, 2005). Subsidiarity means giving authorization to juniors by their seniors on their own jobs (Atasayar, 2005; Berberoğlu, 2004; Ilgar, 2000; Rodoplu, 2009) and thus a junior gets responsibility with a great freedom of action (Tortop, 1994). As for participation to the decision, it means that a less authorized group member can have more power in the management later (Bilge, 2008) and all the participants can have the same equality regardless of their positions during the decision process (Gürkan, 2006).

In order to establish organizational democracy in the educational institutions, MEB (Ministry of National Education) planned to establish organizations to provide cooperation during the application of objectives and principles related with the education (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı [DPT-State Planning Organization], 2009a; Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 2009c) and to give support to these groups (MEB, 2009b). Additionally, it's required to give a vital role in democracy and environment (MEB, 2009d); and to establish organizational structure of the society (Cuhadar, 2006). In the developmental plans, regulations (DPT, 2009b; 2009c) were provided to strengthen democratic level in the public administration and corporations.

Sub-units and provincial organizations have limited the activities and the process of decision-making (DPT, 2009d) due to bureaucracy (DPT, 2009c), unwieldiness, centralization of authorities (MEB, 2009e), enlargement of central organiza-

tion and inefficiency of public participation to the management (Erkal, 2006; DPT, 2009e); and thus all these prevent to provide a democracy culture. The rapid population growth in Turkey causes a trouble to central administrations and this creates a need for local ones (Yücel, 2006). Accordingly, central and local administrations as parts of a whole must be cooperated and this cooperation would contribute to getting efficiency from operations (Cunningham, 2002). The local managements play a vital role in the participatory democracy (Arslan, 2008; Erkal, 2006). Within this framework, in order to disable central and unwieldy structures a plan of reorganization in education system has become a current need in the 58th (Elli Sekizinci Hükümet Programı, 2002) and 59th (Elli Doku-zuncu Hükümet Programı, 2002) Government programmes having principles of efficiency in management through participatory and pluralistic democracy. Accordingly, on the purpose of that object (Elli Beşinci, 1997; MEB, 2009a, 2009b), it's required to minimize bureaucratic procedure, to realize subsidiarity both in ministerial field services and local administrations; and to provide an active role for those organizations and families in the progress of educational services (DPT, 2009d, 2009e). There has been a need for a significant reorganization which focuses on an upstream education basing on subsidiary to protect equality of opportunity for all students (DPT, 2009e), to provide supervision of parents, to reinforce approaches and applications through a team work and democratic behaviours in a wholeness (MEB, 2009e).

Serving a reorganization, it's needed to provide localization through local administrations, to enhance the facility of application within each institution, to encourage localization, participation, to organize (MEB, 2009f, 2009g; DPT, 2009f) and to prevent economic loss (DPT, 2009d) as for education services.

Considering various studies in relevant field, Turkey can hardly meet the requirements of regulations related with localization despite the fact that it's looked positively (Başar, 2008). According to Atasayar's study (2005) which focuses on educational managers and supervisors, more than 70 percent of them think that MEB should give some of its central institution's authorities to local administrations and the system of education should be reorganized.

In order to establish a democratic order in education, student, teacher, director and parents should often participate in common activities as a part of

organizations which contribute to students' desired improvement (MEB, 2009h). In the Elementary Schools Regulations, a significant sentence of "elementary schools is directed by the headmaster together with other staff in a democratic environment of education." is placed; therefore this statement demonstrates that all of the staffs must be included in the management (MEB, 2009ı).

Excessive centralization is regarded to cause difficulty for schools as a kind of educational organization to describe their own aims and identities that decrease the efficiency and also banalizes the educational environment (Töremen & Harktı, 2004). Ilgar (2000) states that applications produce better results when all the members in the organization participate in decision. Accordingly, there are some studies confirming that education organizations get success when teachers participate in the decision making (Aydın, 2000; Bilge, 2008; Gürkan, 2006) and thus makes a great contribution to those teachers' desire to work and morale (Aksay, 2005; Aydın, 2000). In one of those studies related with teachers' participation to the decision, it is achieved that teachers participate in the educational decisions more than administrative ones (Aksay & Ural, 2008) and levels of participation don't reflect variations in terms of their state of education (Takmaz, 2009).

In terms of subsidiarity, Ergül (2006) and Özdayı (2001) state that it is one of essential elements of the management process; Rodoplu(2009) suggests that it has some vital subjects such as responsibility, legibility and clearness in the job, information transfer, feedback, qualified and eager individual for the job; as for Gödek (2006), the authority must be delegated to most qualified junior for the success; as for Yücel (2006) in terms of issues about subsidiarity of education managers, there are variations in type of school, state of education, school's physical structure, number of staff and students; and in his study, Yavuz (2001) clarifies that managers and teachers completely agree that there must be decentralization in schools.

As one of educational organizations, in schools it's seen important to offer authorized officials and teachers for their consideration during execution of organizational democracy. Accordingly, the purpose of this study focuses on adoption and application of organizational democracy in primary schools in view of administrators and teachers.

Objective

In this study, the level of ability to adopt and apply organizational democracy by teachers and administrators in primary schools are examined.

Method

This section contains some information about the model of this study, population and sample which are used for the study scale, data collection tool, process of collection and analysis.

Model

This study is undertaken by using a general descriptive and rational (cause-effect) review model. In this model a survey was undertaken about the sample or the whole in order to have a general judgement about the population which includes a number of element (Karasar, 1995)

Population and Sample

The target population of the research includes 186 administrators and 2227 teachers commissioned in official primary schools under the municipality authority in city Van. Firstly all required primary schools in Van were listed and classified according to lower, medium and higher socio-economic level. The sample, thus contains 75 administrators and 500 teachers working in 24 schools as total number of 8 units of each level. Of the sufficiency of the number of samples, the study benefitted from the table of minimum sample by Çıngı (1994); (cited in Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2008)

Data Collection Tool

In the study, an "Organizational Democracy Scale" has been developed as a data collection tool by the researcher (Şeker, 2010). The scale was operationalized after being examined by five specialists with PhD in educational sciences and three experts in Turkish philology.

In "organizational democracy Scale", five-point likert scale was used for participants' analysis in accordance with the given statements. The scale consists of five options such as strongly disagree (1), slightly agree (2), reasonably agree (3), mostly agree (4), completely agree (5). A levelling scale about adoption levels of subscribers in left column and levels of application in the right, are placed.

Realizing this, it's purposed to survey both two manners at the same time. The scale consists of 36 articles.

Its dimensions are named according to attitude statements placed in the articles. Accordingly while first dimension is named as "period of authority", second one is named as "participation to the decision", and third one is called as "localization". Throughout Varimax rotation analysis, it is regarded that first dimension consists of 19 articles while second and third dimension are consist of 9 and 8 articles respectively.

Solving statistical algorithms, KMO value was found as 0,97, Bartlett's test of sphericity and significance value showed respectively [$\chi^2= 14527,36$; $p < .01$] and about 0,00; consequently this suggested that dimension of the sample in use and data were sufficient for factor analysis. As test of reliability, value of Cronbach Alpha analysis was stated as 0,97. Namely it proved that the scale in use was reliable.

Data Analysis

SPSS software was used for the process of data analysis. According to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which is done throughout total points, it was calculated as adoption level of subscribers ((K-S \cong 0.000) $p < .05$) and application level (K-S \cong 0.026) $p < .05$; thus the distribution wasn't seen as normal. This situation made nonparametric tests required. While "Mann Whitney-U" was performed in two-category variables of sex, job and field, "Kruskal Wallis-H" test was performed in state of education, total period of service and school size which are multi-category variables. "Mann Whitney-U" test was applied in calculation of variation among variables. Evaluating statements, values of arithmetic mean and standard deviation was calculated. Moreover, percent and frequency were used in analysis of demographic values.

Results

The results of the research are described in 6 articles below;

- 1- While subscribers mostly adopt organizational democracy in details, they moderately agree in its application.
- 2- Analyzing "Organizational Democracy Scale", according to variable of field, form masters adopt organizational democracy more than sub-

ject teachers, in primary schools while administrators adopt more than teachers according to variable of job.

- 3- Between administrators and teachers in terms of subsidiarity, form masters adopt the subsidiarity more than subject teachers.
- 4- In terms of "participation to the decision", according to variable of field form masters adopt more than subject teachers while according to state of education high-school graduated teachers more than associate's degreed ones; in variable of school size administrators working in schools with 1001-1500 students more than the ones working in schools with 1-1000 students; and according to variable of job, administrators adopt more than teachers.
- 5- In terms of "localization", it's seen that administrators keep more closely than teachers according to variable of job.
- 6- In terms of application of localization; according to variable of education state, it is stated a significant difference between associate's degreed administrators and bachelors. The former reflects more closely than the latter in terms of application of localization in primary schools.

Suggestions

In the light of our findings, the following suggestions are determined;

- **More and more environment should be established** for application of organizational democracy in Turkish education system.
- **In institutes, all stakeholders should be implicated** in management.
- Required regulations with all details should be made for provision of localization and application of decentralization in education.
- In educational institutes, it should be paid great attention during the distribution of work for suitable staff and tasks should be performed through participation of all organization members instead a centralized system.
- Required regulations should be made in order to provide students to participate in management through an election and in order to assign parents active responsibilities.
- All formalities formed by bureaucracy should be removed completely.

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Yazar Notu:

Bu çalışma "Yönetici ve Öğretmen Algılarına Göre İlköğretim Okullarında Örgütsel Demokrasinin Benimsenme ve Uygulanabilme Düzeyi" isimli tezin makale haline getirilmesiyle oluşmuştur.