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Analyzing teachers' perceptions on learning organizations in terms of different variables

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to analyze primary school teacher's perceptions on learning organizations in terms of different variables. This is a descriptive research in the survey model. The population of the study is teachers who work in primary schools in Kastamonu. The sample of this study was 157 primary school teachers. Learning Organization Assessment Scale developed by Celep, Konaklı and Receptoğlu (2011) was used as a data collection instrument. According to findings of the study, teachers' perceptions on organizational learning don't change according to gender, tenure of office and principals' use of position power while teachers' perceptions change according to their ages.

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1. Introduction

Technological and scientific progress in 21st century leads to transformations in organizations. The necessity of transformation of organizations to learning organizations is inevitable in rapidly changing and developing world. Organizations are now obliged to become learning organizations for adaptation to rapid changes in every field.

Organizations have learning capacity like living organisms. Organizations change their behavior types according to the changing conditions like other living organisms, that is organizations develop their learning capacity (Güçlü, 1999). We can mention about learning organization only if we stop thinking organizations like a machine.

Learning organization approach which has been on the agenda and has been gaining more and more importance since the last quarter of the twentieth century was mentioned for the first time in the studies of Chris Argyris and Donald Schön (cited from 1978 by Bayraktaroğlu & Kutanis, 2002) and this approach was analyzed in detail and systematically in Peter Senge's book of "Fifth Discipline" which was published in 1990. Learning organization notion is based on the system thinking. The system thinking which was characterized as a fifth discipline evaluates management as a whole which differentiated pieces that influence each other constantly and which includes more than the total of these pieces (Senge, 2003). The keystone of the learning organization is a learning individual. The one who will create learning teams and finally learning organization is the learning individual (Bozkurt, 2000). Senge (2003) states that learning organizations learn by means of learning individuals and defines learning

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organizations as dynamic structure which continuously changes, evolves and renews itself. Calvert, Mobley and Marshall (1994) also defines learning organization as

“living organisms which renew themselves, which aim to enable organization-group consistency and individual’s accommodation to the changes, which prepare every kind of environment for the learning that supports necessary individual experiences and which motivate individuals. The shortest definition is that learning organization is an organization which expands its capacity continuously (Tüz, 1996, p.: 36).

Social and political developments, technological innovations, continual and rapid changes in environment and developing possibilities of access to information also force educational organizations to change. The number of researches on educational organizations in Turkey is insufficient. Therefore, it is of great importance to search organizational learning potential of schools and their needs to become learning organizations.

The aim of this research is to analyze primary school teacher’s perceptions on learning organizations in terms of different variables. In order to realize this aim, educational practices, supportive leadership, communication and education technology, information sharing and cooperation dimensions of organizational learning are analyzed in terms of teachers’ perceptions. In this context, answers were sought to these following questions.

1. Do teachers’ perceptions on learning organizations show a meaningful difference in terms of teachers’ gender, age and tenure of office?

2. Do teachers’ perceptions on learning organizations show a meaningful difference in terms of school principals’ use of position power?

2. Methodology

This is a descriptive research in the survey model. The population of the study is teachers who work in primary schools in Kastamonu. The study sample of this study was 157 primary school teachers working in central province of Kastamonu. Teachers were selected randomly from 16 primary schools.

2.1. Participants

250 questionnaires were delivered to the teachers and 157 questionnaires were used in data analysis. 33,1% of the teachers were 22-30 years old, 37,6% of the teachers were 31-40, 26,1% of the teachers were 41-50 and 3,2% were 51-60. The split between genders was in favor of female with 57,3 % female and 42,7% male. In terms of tenure, almost 40% of the participants had more than 5 years of experience as an educator and almost 60% of the participants had 0-5 years of teaching experience.

2.2. Data collection and data analysis

“Learning Organization Assessment Scale” developed by Celep, Konaklı and Reçepoğlu (2011) was used as a data collection instrument. In the research done by Celep, Konaklı and Reçepoğlu (2011), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Sample Efficiency Test and Barlett Test were carried out and KMO value was above 0,50 and Barlett test was meaningful (0,05 importance degree). Data set was found suitable to the factor analysis (KMO=0,922, χ^2 Barlett test (528)= 4854,09 , p=0,000). Five-point Likert type survey ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) has been used for the purpose of measuring teachers’ perceptions regarding organizational learning. According to the result of the factor analysis of this survey, it was seen that Eigen value of 33 items was classified under 4 factors which are bigger than 1. It was determined that the first of the these factors explains 25,3% of the variance, the second factor explains 17,2% of the variance, the third factor explains 10,3% and the fourth explains 9,2% of the variance. It was determined that four factors explain 62% of the variance. Considering the contents of the questions in factors, dimensions were entitled as educational practices, supportive leadership, communication and educational technologies, information sharing and cooperation. In instructional practices dimension, factor loadings change between ,66 and ,76; Cronbach’s Alpha value is ,83. In supportive leadership dimension, factor loadings change between ,42 and ,78; Cronbach’s Alpha value is ,80. In communication and educational technologies dimension, factor loadings change between ,49 and ,78; Cronbach’s Alpha value is ,93. In information sharing and cooperation dimension, factor loadings change between ,46 and ,67; Cronbach’s Alpha value is ,88. The general reliability of the scale is ,89. and for this study it is ,94

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