

Artículo de investigación

Opinions of education administrators regarding the impact of their leadership features on the mobbing and organisational commitment of teachers

Opiniones de los administradores de educación sobre el impacto de sus funciones de liderazgo en el mobbing y el compromiso organizacional de los maestros

Opiniões dos administradores de educação sobre o impacto de suas características de liderança no comprometimento coletivo e organizacional dos professores

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Abstract

This research was conducted with the qualitative research pattern and in the screening model in order to identify the leadership styles of education administrators and the organisational commitment and mobbing exposed by the teachers. From the qualitative research techniques, the semi-structured interview and document analysis were used for the data collection. The generated data indicated that the leadership styles of school administrators have major impact on the organisational commitment and mobbing experience levels of teachers. The results of the research have major significance since they are considered to have important impact on the identification of negative factors on the organisational commitments of teachers and enhancement of the organisational commitments. In consideration with the research results, the shortcomings in the knowledge about the leadership and leadership styles in addition to the low organisational commitment should be taken into great consideration. The recommendations developed following the results are considered to be beneficial for the prevention of future negative behaviours between the school administrators and teachers and the associated negative circumstances.

Resumen

Esta investigación se llevó a cabo con el patrón de investigación cualitativo y en el modelo de detección para identificar los estilos de liderazgo de los administradores de educación y el compromiso organizacional y el mobbing expuestos por los maestros. A partir de las técnicas de investigación cualitativa, se utilizaron la entrevista semiestructurada y el análisis de documentos para la recolección de datos. Los datos generados indicaron que los estilos de liderazgo de los administradores escolares tienen un gran impacto en el compromiso organizacional y los niveles de experiencia de mobbing de los maestros. Los resultados de la investigación tienen una gran importancia, ya que se considera que tienen un impacto importante en la identificación de factores negativos en los compromisos organizacionales de los docentes y la mejora de los compromisos organizacionales. En consideración con los resultados de la investigación, las deficiencias en el conocimiento sobre el liderazgo y los estilos de liderazgo, además del bajo compromiso de la organización, deben tomarse en consideración. Las recomendaciones desarrolladas después de los resultados se consideran beneficiosas para la prevención de futuros comportamientos negativos entre los administradores de la escuela y los maestros y las circunstancias negativas asociadas.

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Keywords: Education administrators, Leadership Features, Mobbing, Organisational Commitment.

Palabras claves: Administradores de educación, características de liderazgo, mobbing, compromiso organizacional.

Resumo

Esta pesquisa foi realizada com o padrão de pesquisa qualitativa e no modelo de triagem, a fim de identificar os estilos de liderança dos gestores de educação e o comprometimento organizacional e mobbing exposto pelos professores. A partir das técnicas de pesquisa qualitativa, utilizou-se a entrevista semiestruturada e a análise documental para a coleta de dados. Os dados gerados indicaram que os estilos de liderança dos administradores escolares têm grande impacto nos níveis de comprometimento organizacional e experiência de mobbing dos professores. Os resultados da pesquisa têm grande importância, uma vez que são considerados importantes para a identificação de fatores negativos nos compromissos organizacionais dos professores e para o aprimoramento dos compromissos organizacionais. Em consideração aos resultados da pesquisa, as deficiências no conhecimento sobre os estilos de liderança e liderança, além do baixo comprometimento organizacional, devem ser levadas em consideração. As recomendações desenvolvidas após os resultados são consideradas benéficas para a prevenção de futuros comportamentos negativos entre os administradores e professores da escola e as circunstâncias negativas associadas.

Palavras-chave: Administradores da educação, características de liderança, assédio moral, compromisso organizacional

Introduction

According to the studies, people, who work in a positive organisation environment, have higher job satisfaction and are more efficient (Mulki, Jaramillo and Locander, 2009; Vardi, 2001), have higher motivation, efficiency, organisational behaviours and organisational commitments (Cullen, Parboteeah and Victor, 2003; Schwepker, 2001), have more ethical behaviours (Bartels, Deshpande, Fritzsche, 2000; George and Joseph, 2000; Harrick, Martell and Strickland, 1998), have less negative behaviours within the organisation (Peterson, 2002), create more quality organisation output (Weeks and Nantel, 2004), show less role conflicts and disturbance and higher trust towards the administrator (Mulki, Jaramillo and Locander, 2008). Additionally, teachers show more commitment to the school in a positive and healthy school environment (Turan, 2002). Pursuant to the studies on the education organisations, teachers are exposed to heavy work burdens causing particularly stress and tension, experience excessive stress and exhaustion (Boyle, Borg, Falzon and Baglioni, 1995; Capel, 1991; Cemaloglu, 2007b) and are faced with more mobbing behaviours when compared with the other professions (Cemaloglu, 2007b; Ertürk, 2005; Hoel, Faragher and Cooper, 2004; Hubert and Veldhoven, 2001).

The individuals experiencing mobbing in the organisations have less job satisfaction and self-confidence, feel shame and guilt as well as helplessness and despair, have lower self-respect, are isolated in the organisation, experience deep hopelessness, are criticized in an unfair way for their efforts, lose their motivation due to unfairness and distance from the realisation of organisational objectives due to their concern and depression (Blase and Blase, 2002; Hoosen and Callaghan, 2004; Lewis, 2004; Leymann, 1990; Matthiesen, 2006; Tinaz, 2006). O'Driscoll and Beehr (1994) indicated that the reason for the work and work environment related problems of employees are related with the behaviours of administrators. Einarsen (1999) and Vartia (1996) noted that the reason of negative behaviours at the work place is the weak administration and lack of leadership skills in the administrators. Bulutlar and Öz (2009) and Peterson (2002) emphasized that an ethical organisational environment diminish the frequency of mobbing behaviours that have an impact on the functioning of organisation.

Although the researchers indicate that the leadership behaviours of school administrators and organisational trust have an impact on mobbing; the number of studies conducted in

this domain is limited. Einarsen (1999) underlined that more studies must be performed to understand the reasons and nature of mobbing. Therefore, this research aims to study the opinions regarding the impact of leadership features of teachers on the mobbing and organisational commitment.

Considering the literature, the leadership styles of school administrators and mobbing and organisational commitment have been evaluated as variables that affect and be affected from each other abroad; however, many questions regarding this issue have been left unanswered. This study assessed the relationship between the leadership styles of school administrators and mobbing levels of teachers, and the impact of decrease or increase in mobbing level on the organisational commitment (Yağcı, Uluöz, 2017).

Method

This section includes the model of research, working group, data collection and explanations on the data analysis.

The Model of the Research

In the qualitative research phase, this study was conducted in the qualitative research pattern and screening model to deliver the impact of leadership features of education administrators on the effect of mobbing and organisational commitment among teachers in addition to using qualitative research techniques suitable to data collection and semi-structured interview and document analysis. The content analysis was performed for the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data generated from the participants. The interview technique can be classified as structured, semi-structured and non-structured interviews (Tanrıöğen, 2011). The questions for the semi-structured interview were prepared before and the related questions were used in the research accordingly as how it is in the nature of semi-structured interview. However, during the data collection phase, the researcher may add new questions at the time of interview (Karasar, 2010). This method is not as rigid as the structured interviews and not as flexible as the non-structured interviews. As such flexibility is provided to the researcher, the semi-structured interview technique was used for this study.

Working Group

This study is limited with the secondary schools (total number of 13) under the Ministry of National Education within the boundaries of Nicosia, the central district of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus for the academic year of 2014-2015. The private and vocational schools under the general secondary education were not included in this study.

Among the secondary school within the working group, the total 8 schools were selected as the most crowded and central schools. This study was planned to be conducted with all secondary education school principals in the beginning but in the end 8 school principals were taken under the study and the study was conducted accordingly as some school principals did not accept the interview.

Data Collection Tool

As the data collection tool for the qualitative research, the questions in the semi-structured interview form prepared with the school administrators were asked and the personal information form was used. In order to show the opinions regarding the impact of leadership features of education administrators on the mobbing and organisational commitments among the teachers, the semi-structured interview technique was used for the data collection tool and a number of 6 open-ended questions were asked to identify the opinions of school administrators.

In the qualitative research approach, the in-depth interview (face-to face), direct observation and document analysis techniques are generally used (Legard, Keegan and Ward, 2003). The data of research were generated through "face-to-face technique", which is frequently preferred in the qualitative research approach enabling to understand the perspectives of participants about the subject that can not be observed with other data collection tools. The in-depth or face-to-face interviews have some advantages as they have high answer rate, they provide flexibility in the order of questions and opportunity to control on the environment as well as in-depth information related with the subject matter (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). This method is a foundation for the reveal of various dimensions like reasons, feelings, ideas and beliefs, which are the basis for the answers (Legard, Keegan and Ward, 2003).

Patton (Quot: Marshall and Rossman, 1999) defined three types of interviews as conversation style interview, standard open-ended interview and interview form approach. Semi-structured interview method, which is defined as the interview form approach, was used in this research. This method was preferred as it gives the flexibility to the researcher in the preparation and order of questions as well as provides the facilitation to intervene when necessary. In such interview, the researcher has a kind of questionnaire comprised of questions or topics in relation with the research subject. Hence, the researcher can ask such questions to the participants at any times and may create alternative questions that are not in the questionnaire depending on the answers given and may use explanatory questions that would help the participant to express the opinions in a more elaborated way.

Data Collection Process

During the data collection phase, the school principals of secondary education in Nicosia, TRNC were interviewed. The participants were informed in advanced about the aim of study and interview method, which was chosen as the data collection method. Appointments were arranged with the voluntary participants and the data were collected during the fall semester of 2014-2015 academic year. Upon taking the required permits from the Ministry of Education, the data collection phase was launched.

During the face-to-face interviews with the administrators, the complete interview was recorded with a voice recorder in order not to lose any data in accordance with the voluntarism principle; the confidentiality had high significance. Each interview was an average of 20 min. long. In addition to using voice recorders during the interviews, written notes were also taken in order to eliminate any confusion during the interview as well as maintain the interview in a systematic way. At the end of each interview, a certain time was allocated to thank the participants for their contributions.

Data Analysis

Open-ended questions are asked during the semi-structured interviews. The interviewees are expected to give elaborated answers. Each answer is categorised and inserted into the tables. Following the first categorisation, the researcher reviews the data and main themes as

well as categories are determined. The field related with such themes and categories are taken into consideration and the categories with similar patterns were matched and the categories with variances were put different categories and coded. The administrators were indicated next to the related answer. The sentences form the categories were written in the statement part as an example. The individual interviews were performed when the administrators were available. The interviews were conducted in a place suitable for face-to-face discussion. The administrators were observed to give answers without any problem. Some answers of administrators were short. The researcher asked the same questions again and aimed to lead the administrators into thinking more on the questions.

The data generated for the content analysis were entered into computer. Then the raw data texts were groups on the basis of questions in the interview form. The content analyses were conducted on such grouped texts. At the reporting phase of research, the codes such as GR1, GR2, GR3; GÖ1, GÖ2, G3... were used for the participants and direct quotations were used to improve the reliability.

At the end of data coding phase, the main themes, main categories and sub-categories were determined as they are the findings of this study. Additionally, the variation, one of the most used strategies of qualitative research methods, was performed to test the validity and reliability of data analysis.

Findings

In this section, the data collected through data collection tools are analysed and the results are interpreted accordingly. Each table is interpreted individually.

- Dimension: Opinions of administrators regarding whether their leadership nature have an impact on the organisational commitments of teachers.

All of the school administrators that participated to the research had indicated that the leadership natures of administrators have an impact on the organisational commitments of teachers. "...We as leaders have a common aim in accordance with the common objectives; to raise our students towards the needs of community, in other words our aim in raising them is common. I believe that using the school resources in the most compatible way, making democratic

decisions, ensuring that the perception of good decisions were made are all affecting the organisational structure. You have to be democratic and influence the majority. As I indicated above, the principals or administrators change depending on the place and time. Sad to say, it is difficult to be an administrator at state departments and schools.” (G:R(1)). According to another administrator; “...The approach-attitude- of leaders, who is the school principal in the problem resolution phase have either negative or positive impact on the organisational commitment. If the leader included the teachers into the decision-making process then it is difficult to interrupt the works as mutual consultation was performed at the time of decision-making. The educational activities might be interrupted if teachers do not participate to the decision-making process and are constantly instructed about what to be done since they are not consulted; hence no contribution is made. A leader must be democratic, transformational and fair as well as objective in the activity assessment” (G:R(5)). According to another administrator; “...The commitment of principals for their school is one of the factors affecting the leadership. Of course, I personally think that the school principals have to have two qualifications, one of which is to be a good administrator in order to comply with all the laws and regulations. Moreover a principal should be a good leader too. A leader sets a vision, shows a target and motivates. The exact Turkish word might be ‘to trigger’ or ‘the intuitive’. You might motivate wit external factors with nice words or some financial contributions but the most important thing is to make that person act with instinctive behaviours. I think that this is what is needed, not only at schools but the leaders always show targets and determine the vision. All of such become reality with leadership and administrators with leadership features”(G:R(8)). Other administrator indicated that “...First of all a school principal, which we call leader, is a component that strengthens a school in terms of moral and physical factors. School principle is the backbone. If a principal has knowledge and show love and respect then regardless the vicious nature of teachers, they are influenced with that person and then the school would provide a successful education”(G:R(7)).

- **Dimension:** “Opinions of administrators regarding their methods towards the change in the mobbing exposure of teachers.

The administrators noted that in their methods used for the variation of mobbing exposure among teachers, they do not behave in a way that would affect the mobbing among teachers and they create a democratic environment in general. “...A leader must motivate the teacher, must set a vision and mission for himself; he must be sharing and must identify an effective strategy together with the stakeholders in a team-work” (G:R(3)) and (G:R(2)) “...First of all, he should set a vision and become a leader, who questions whether everything is that so within that vision. He should not only work with the ones, who are close to him but also he should try to find ways to bring the distanced ones together. Schools are a slight reflection of school. If there is a pioneering leader at a school, the individuals, even in an environment where everything is going wrong, would not be problem oriented but would look for solutions. In a problematic environment, a lot of skill and ability is required to lead people for solutions. “...Mobbing is not something that I approve; it is not even my style. As you know, being a leader and administrator are two different things. In my perspective, a good leader can lead communities without any pressure. Otherwise, forcing people for a work through using a position as well as mobbing is a very offending act. It is not natural” (G:R(6)). Another administrator indicated, “...In general, the structure of society is changing. There is violence and arguments, which all are reflected on the education. And then you are faced with mobbing. For a school leader, it is very difficult to activate the administration discipline regulation. Everything must be transparent and open”(G:R(7)). The other administrator stated, “...Whether private or public, the national education regulation and legislations and their amendments discourage us every year and we do not hear good things from our teachers when we give them the news about the wages. In private sector, the teachers consider mobbing in terms of their wages. Then they are discouraged and leave work. It is not easy to keep a quality teacher in private sector or finding another good teacher for the one leaving the job. The acceptance of a new teacher and adaptation are not also easy too”(G:R(1)).

- **Dimension:** “Opinions of administrators regarding their methodology for the improvement of organisational commitments among teachers”

Administrators indicated a number of opinions for the improvement of organisational commitments among teachers. “...I try to be

democratic, fair and objective. I think that I have good relations with the teachers. I aim not to do mobbing”(G:R(5)). Another administrator stated; “...Trust and commitment, the commitment towards our organisation, ownership. Team work and majority concept, not working as an individual but being awarded like a team (G:R(1)). “...I assess every teacher with the complete year performance and most importantly, we build our communication, I celebrate them in the meetings and encourage them. We are in good relations with out parents association”(G:R(3)). “.....One of the main characteristics of education is to improve the organisational commitment. Therefore, we always undertake the projects together with the teachers whenever we do group work in our educational activities. The more teachers participate to the program development and improvement, the stronger our team spirit and communication become”(G:R(6)). According to another school administrator; “...we have to be very careful and work together in the implementation of programs and methods. Teachers must be included in all social and academic activities. Otherwise, the teacher would be discouraged and the education quality gets worse.

Results and Recommendations

This chapter discusses the findings and results based on the interpretation and the recommendations in relation with the results accordingly.

The common view of all administrators under the scope of this study is that the leadership nature of administrators has an impact on the organisational commitments of teachers. Particularly, the participation of teachers ensured by a democratic leader would increase the organisational commitment. As the organisational commitment has various areas that it has an impact, it also influences the organisational commitment. As a result of studies conducted on this matter, Luthans (1992) noted that the personal factors (investment, years of experience), work factors (position, nature of position, limits, controversies and inconsistencies) and factors within and outside the organisation have an impact on the organisational commitment; and he also stated the existence of leadership model in the inter-organisation elements and professional options in the elements that are not in the organisation in addition to the nature of person (positive –

negative sentimentality; a point of supervision where a person can supervise oneself).

While the administrator is a person that implements the existing structures and appropriate methods to reach the organisational objectives; the leader is the person that can influence people rather than using the traditional methods used by an administrator such as ordering. Hence, the leadership is effective between the relations among people and influence them while ensuring the use of ways required to reach the identified objectives (Celep, 2004). Elkins (1980) had also made a similar definition, as the leader is an influencing person on the environment in reaching the organisational objectives. They use their existing authorities and affect their surroundings. The relevant authority is related with influencing the acts of others and refers to the authority acquired when reached to the resources that are not available in people or groups yet required. Some of the definitions of organisational commitment are; the perception of an individual together with the organisation or workplace (Leong, Furnham and Cooper, 1996); the sense of organisation and unity given by the organisation to an individual, partners or employees (Lambert et.al., 2010).

The administrators mainly indicated that the behaviours that might have a negative impact on the mobbing levels of teachers do not generally happen in the school with democratic environment and in compliance with the legislation; the mobbing is not generally observed in the state schools and the mobbing behaviours, which can be rarely observed in the private schools, are mainly caused due to the negative impacts of wage policies. The concept of mobbing exists since the beginning of work life but yet there is no consensus regarding its definition. Additionally, the people that are exposed to mobbing at their workplaces consider such acts as routine conflicts or daily problems. Such perceptions mislead the researches and make it difficult diagnose (Ertürk, 2005). Moreover; Tinaz (2006) discusses that the lack of knowledge about mobbing in Turkey is related with the fact that people do not know what they encounter and the most important element in fighting with mobbing is based on the consideration of the problems by the victim as well as the employer, colleagues and whole community.

The studies on the mobbing indicate that out of the total mobbing acts, the rate of USA is 81% (Vandekerckhove and Commers 2003), and the rates in Germany, Austria and England are between 70% and 80%; and the people, who experience mobbing from their seniors affect more than others (Einarsen, 1999). Pursuant to the various studies conducted in Turkey (Ertürk, 2005; Cemaloğlu, 2007a, Cemaloğlu, 2007b; Cemaloğlu and Ertürk 2007; Cemaloğlu and Ertürk, 2008; Kılınc, 2010; Gündüz and Yılmaz, 2008; Sağlam Çiçek, 2008; Dick and Wagner, 2001), teachers are exposed to a high level of mobbing and more than half of mobbing acts are towards the teachers working under the school administrators. The study conducted by Hubert and Veldhoven (2001) noted that mobbing acts are widely experienced in the education institutions and 37,3% of such acts is among the employees. Upon the interviews with the people exposed to mobbing, some researchers noted that such people are exceptional as they have high emotional intelligence; they assess their own behaviours and they correct themselves when they see that they are wrong. They are generally rational people with principles, who can question and are not be led by others but they lead themselves (Davenport et.al., 2003). The studies stated that the mobbing at the workplace have a prominent impact on the organisational environment (Araújo et.al., 2010). Researchers like Agervold and Mikkelsen (2004) underline that the adopted leadership style is one of the reasons of mobbing. Similarly Cemaloğlu (2007b) noted that mobbing might be experienced in every organisation, that there are various factors in the performance of mobbing where the leadership styles of organisation administrator are one of the significant variables.

The researched underlined that mobbing is observed in the big and bureaucratic organisations and the mobbing performers are more widely seen. Moreover, the strict and weak authority style and laissez-faire style leadership are related with the mobbing (Salin, 2003).

In order to improve the organisational commitments of teachers, the administrators mainly use team work, participation, awarding, reconciliation methods, working with joint decisions in the parents association activities, democratic management style, meeting the technological needs of school in accordance with the demands of teachers, using feudal/informal relations in relations in addition to formal

relations and collective decision-making and application in social and academic activities as the effective methods. The scope and characteristics are the factors that are organisational based and have an impact on the organisation. The quality and significance of activity for the society influence the commitment level. If the quality and significance are high then the organisational commitment will increase. The administrative style is also one of the factors that affect the establishment of commitment towards the objectives and values of organisation. When the senior level management gives importance to the organisational culture and values, the productivity and progressiveness increase (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The negative attitudes that would be performed by the management towards the employees such as the authoritarian statements, dominance would cause negative outcomes as decrease in productivity and not to be creative and would affect the commitment of individual accordingly. The available information regarding the general functioning of organisation is one of the most significant indicators for the functioning of organisation (Goffee and Gareth, 2000). The indicator, which is also called as the organisational culture, has an impact on the activities of employees and the general organisational functioning (Chow et.al., 2006).

The accomplishment in reaching the objectives and maintaining the activities in an efficient way for the education system and school can be realized when the school administrator and teachers believe and accept the objectives and values determined by the school and education system (Celep, 2000).

In order to reach the general conclusion of research, the aim was to identify the opinions of education administrators concerning the leadership characteristics on the impact of mobbing and organisational commitment. Therefore, the leadership characteristics and organisational structure are among the most important factors affecting the commitment. Within this framework, the size and structure of organisation, terms on the working hours and working hours, opportunities for the specialisation in the profession, leadership attitude, organisation status, image of organisation, total quality management activities, promotion opportunities within the organisation, wage rates, wage arrangements, rights granted other than the wage, rewarding arrangements, performance system and participation to management process are all organisation based

factors (Byington and Johnston, 1991; Sağlam; Koç and Yavuz, 2007).

Recommendations

The recommendations towards the researchers and implementing parties are as follows:

1. School administrators and school staff (teacher, secretary and other staff) should be informed about the leadership and management process. For such purpose, the in-service trainings should be organised, practice based activities should be performed and if possible, the participation to such courses should be mandatory.

2. The active participation of teacher to all kinds of activities at school should be ensured. An improvement in the organisational commitment might be realized as a result of such participation. Hence, in any situation requiring "decision-making" process, the teachers as well as the administrators should actively be in this process.

3. The supervision mechanism should be developed at school. Letters and questionnaires can be used in regular intervals to obtain information about the existing situation and the teachers should be included to the management process to develop participatory management approach.

4. When the school is considered as an organisation, the administrators, teachers and other school staff should be ensured to understand that it is not about creating an interest for the school. Therefore, the sub-dimensions of organisational commitment "adaptation, identification and internalisation" would be developed in a balanced and equal way in the school.

5. The time spent by the teachers at school should be increased, which would improve the organisational commitment. For this purpose, the laws might be implemented actively.

6. The social sharing might be improved in the school through the positive communication between the school administrators and teachers, which can prevent mobbing.

7. The organisational commitment can be improved through the positive atmosphere at the school, which can prevent the formation of negative behaviour.

8. The individuals, who think that they were exposed to mobbing, should explicitly express this. Hence, the performers of such act can be assessed accordingly.

9. Legal regulations concerning mobbing should be in place. The school staff (administrators – teacher – other personnel) should be informed about mobbing. Any teacher or staff that has knowledge about mobbing should define such act in case of any exposure.

10. The inspectors of the Ministry of National Education might be consulted in the studies of this matter and their views might contribute to the study accordingly.

11. The performance of mobbing level on the administrators as applied in this study might contribute to this research.

12. This research was conducted with the administrators of public schools. The performance of a similar study at private schools might be recommended. The public and private schools can then be compared.

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