
Correlation between School Principals' Instructional Leadership Behaviours and Teachers' Organisational Trust Perceptions

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between instructional leadership behaviours of school principals and organisational trust perceptions of teachers and it was also examined the prediction level of instructional leadership behaviours of school principals for organisational trust of elementary school teachers. The study was carried out in the centre of Nigde in elementary schools in 2009-2010 academic year. In total there were 71 elementary school principals and 401 elementary school teachers in the sample. The respondents were selected randomly from the population. The "correlative investigation model" was adopted in the research. In accordance with the purpose of the study, the Pearson moments' correlation coefficient and step-wise regression tests were employed in the study in order to examine the data obtained. "The organisational trust scale" and "the instructional leadership behaviours of school principals scale" were used in order to collect data for the study. For the statistical analyses SPSS 15.0 was used. The results of the study showed that there is a positive significant correlation between instructional leadership behaviours of school principals and organisational trust perceptions of teachers. On the other hand, it was also seen in the study that all factors of the instructional leadership behaviours have a significant prediction level for all of the factors of the organisational trust. The obtained results in the study indicate that these variables are inter-related and closely correlated in the school organisation.

Keywords

School principals, instructional leadership, teacher organisational trust, leadership, school organisation

Introduction

The behaviour of employees in organisational life and their correlation with their jobs are affected by many variables (Çokluk & Yılmaz, 2010). One of the most important of these variables is instructional leadership of school principals since instructional leadership is considered as the behaviour of influencing teachers. The effects of instructional leadership of school principals on teachers' organisational trust perceptions can be regarded as one of the most crucial factors which play a critical role in the positive development of teachers' organisational trust at school. Thus, school principals should have the necessary power to

influence the teacher trust in their school by demonstrating instructional leadership behaviours (Baş & Yıldırım, 2010; Yavuz & Baş, 2010).

Instructional leadership emerged in the early 1980s as an outgrowth from early research on effective schools (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982; Edmonds, 1979). Instructional leadership had been interpreted in various ways (De Bevoise, 1984; Daresh & Ching-Jen, 1985; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Andrews & Soder, 1987; Hallinger & Heck, 2003; Hallinger, Taraseina & Miller, 1994; Harcher & Hyle, 1996; Blank, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989; Krug, 1992; Wildly & Dimmock, 1993). For example, instructional leadership consists of principal behaviours that set high expectations and clear goals for student and teacher performance, monitor and provide feedback regarding the technical core (teaching and learning) of schools, provide and promote professional growth for all staff members, and help create and maintain a school climate of high academic success (Blase & Blase, 1999; Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982; Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

Effective instructional leadership is generally recognised as the most important characteristic of school principals (Hoy & Hoy, 2009). As Barth (1990) stipulates, the principal is the key to a good school. Thus, the school principal's role as a leader, administrator and change agent is far reaching. Principals are responsible for working with the entire spectrum of stakeholders: from students to school board members, parents to policymakers, teachers to local business owners, support staff to union officials. Just when the principal's pot appears to be running over, another ingredient is added to the mix—the instructional leader (Mangin, 2007). Also, the principal's role in instructional leadership means working cooperatively with other people to improve student achievement at school. A leader's capacity for social awareness, empathic behaviour, decision making, and the ability to exert a positive influence over others are pivotal skills in attaining those goals (Yıldırım, 2005).

According to Blase and Blase (1999), literature about instructional leadership falls into several broad areas. The first area presents instructional leadership as a prescriptive model (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2001). The second area consists of the indirect result of principal-teacher conferences and careful monitoring of student success (Blase & Blase, 1999). The third area involves the direct effects of principal behaviour on teachers and classroom instruction. Finally, the last area of literature examines the direct and indirect effects of instructional leadership on student achievement (Blase & Blase, 1999).

Research confirms that effective principals increase student achievement and that successful schools have a clear sense of direction and they are supported by principals who demonstrate effective instructional leadership behaviours (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003; Hessel & Holloway, 2002; Andrews & Soder, 1987). School effectiveness research also supports the need for school leaders to exhibit strong instructional leadership (Edmonds, 1979; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Sheppard, 1996; Blase & Blase, 1998). Instructional leadership behaviours have significant impact on the technical core of schools. Research shows that principals who demonstrate instructional leadership behaviours extract more commitment and satisfaction from teachers, as well as establish a climate that encourages trust, risk, and collaboration (Larson-Knight, 2000; Blase & Blase, 1998, 1999; Sheppard, 1996). Promoting an academic learning climate refers to the behaviours of the principal that influence the norms, beliefs, and attitudes of the teachers, students, and parents in a school (Author B).

It is not only sufficient that school principals demonstrate instructional leadership behaviours, but it is also necessary the school principals should make the teachers feel trust in the school organisation. According to Podsakoff, McKenzie and Bommer (1996), teacher trust in the leader and the colleagues are some of the most important variables which can

mediate the effectiveness of instructional leadership in terms of producing performance outcomes.

The topic of trust is generating interest in organisational studies (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Hoy, Gage & Tarter, 2006; Mayer, Davis & Shoorman, 1995). In this sense, organisational trust can be described as the belief than an employee feels towards his or her own organisation (Gilbert & Tang, 1998). Organisational trust is an individual's being confident about any applications and policies that will affect the organisation and having positive expectations about them (Lewicki, McAllister & Bies, 1998). According to O'Toole (2002), trust is like a glue providing human being tied up to each other as a group. Employees in organisations expect trust from principals before all else (As cited in Erden & Erden, 2009). Trust is the accumulation of all behaviours of principals. As principals are treating sincere, open, consisted and foresighted towards the employees, then trust will occur. It shows the belief of employees towards the organisation's purposes and leaders regarding organisational actions having been for the benefit of the employees (Gilbert & Tang, 1998).

As there is no common definition on trust in the literature, there is not a unity on what constitutes the structure of trust (Erden & Erden, 2009). Hence, organisational trust cannot be considered as one-sided concept (Yılmaz, 2008). Many dimensions of trust can be seen in the studies in the related literature (Buttler & Centrell, 1984; Mishra, 1996; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Thus, there are numerous theoretical (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Bruhn, 2002; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003) and applied (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Hoy & Tarter, 2004; Hoy, Gage & Tarter, 2006) studies about organisational trust.

Trust is one of the most important elements of effective relations in organisations (Yılmaz, 2004, 2008; Yılmaz & Taşdan, 2009). According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998), being trustworthy is amongst the crucial qualifications that a leader should possess. Trust has a role of mortar which holds the leader and his followers together.

Trust provides many benefits in organisational life. A trustworthy atmosphere has an important role in openness for development in an effective communication and in organisational effectiveness (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). In organisations where trust is dominant, one can see an open and participating atmosphere, responsible employees, productivity, compromise culture, team work, high job satisfaction and participation in decisions (Yılmaz, 2008; Yılmaz & Taşdan, 2009).

Democratic management requires increasingly trust atmosphere. Making decisions together and accepting school principal's giving commonsensical decisions require trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Thus, trust constitutes the invisible nature of relations in school organisation (Hargreaves, 2002). As Morris and Chamberlain (1998) state, effectiveness of a school is determined by the shared values, expectations and fears of the school's main resources so that the main task of a school principal is to build trust and widespread it at school. According to Balcı (2007), trust is at the expressive activities dimension in the determination of an effective school. As Aydın (2000) states, with the qualifications of a school principal, trust is one of the most crucial qualities of an effective school principal.

Schools are the organisations where human relations are intensive. Thus, human relations require trust at school. Any kind of trust at school will affect the future of school positively or negatively. Through fast changes, trust for schools is an important issue, but it is getting to gain trust from day to day in school organisation (Erden & Erden, 2009). According to Tschannen-Moran (2004), absence of teacher trust at school may cause conflict. In this sense,

it is necessarily important to understand the concept of teacher trust in order to maintain the development of the school organisation.

Despite recent theoretical and empirical studies linking instructional leadership to some variables, there remains a need to open the leadership “black box” (Hunt, Boal & Sorenson, 1990). According to Yılmaz (2004) and Yılmaz and Taşdan (2009), organisational trust of teachers arises from the demonstration of effective leadership behaviours of school principals. If the school principal demonstrates effective leadership behaviours, then the organisational trust perceptions of teachers increase. Thus, it can be stated that effective leadership of a school principal increases the organisational trust perceptions of teachers. This situation is defined and explained in some studies (Yılmaz, 2004; Yılmaz & Taşdan, 2009; Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2002; Erden & Erden, 2009; Turan, 2001; Demircan & Ceylan, 2003; Yılmaz, 2006) examining the correlation between school principals’ leadership behaviours and organisational trust of teachers in the literature. Although there are studies (Yılmaz, 2004; Yılmaz & Taşdan, 2009; Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2002; Erden & Erden, 2009; Turan, 2001; Demircan & Ceylan, 2003; Yılmaz, 2006) which examine the correlation between school principals’ leadership behaviours and organisational trust of teachers in educational organisations, there are not any studies carried out on the correlation between school principals’ instructional leadership, which is the leadership style derived from the nature of the school, and organisational trust of teachers. In this sense, the purpose of this study can be stated to examine the correlation between instructional leadership behaviours of elementary school principals and organisational trust perceptions of elementary teachers. In order to examine the correlation between these variables, the following questions will be tried to be answered in the research:

1. Is there a significant correlation between instructional leadership behaviours of school principals and organisational trust of teachers?
2. What is the prediction level of instructional leadership behaviours of school principals for the organisational trust perceptions of teachers?

Methodology

In this research “the correlative investigation model”, which is one of the most applied models in the literature, was used (Cohen et al., 2003). This model is used to determine the correlation between different variables in educational and social researches (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The correlative investigation model aims to identify the existence or level of coordinate change between two or more variables (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Population and Sampling

The population of this study consists of schools principals and teachers working in elementary schools in 2009-2010 academic year within the borders of Nigde province and its districts (MEB, 2009). In order to detect the sampling of the study, elementary schools in cosmos, 401 elementary school teachers and 72 elementary school principals, who work in public elementary schools were detected according to three-layer group sampling method according to socio-economic structure (high-middle-low) of their region, volunteered to participate in the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The subjects were assured for the anonymity and confidentiality for their responses.

Data Collection Instruments

In this study, “the organisational trust scale” (Yılmaz, 2006) and “the instructional leadership behaviours of school principals scale” (Şişman, 2004) were used in order to collect data to answer the research questions.

Organisational Trust Scale

“The organisational trust scale” developed by Yılmaz (2006) was used in order to collect data for teachers’ perceptions in the research. The scale consists of three sub-scales and 22 items. The sub-scales of “the organisational trust scale” are as follows: (1) *trust towards administrators*, (2) *trust towards colleagues*, and (3) *trust towards shareholders*. The Cronbach’s alpha level of the scale was calculated as .91. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy result of the scale was found as .807 and the Bartlett test result was found as $\chi^2 = 2735,61$ ($p = .000$). These results show that there is a strong correlation amongst the items. In light of the data, it can be said that the “the organisational trust scale” is both reliable and valid to be used in the current research.

Instructional Leadership Behaviours of School Principals Scale

“Instructional leadership behaviours of school principals scale” developed by Şişman (2004) was used in order to collect data for school principals’ perceptions. The scale consists of five sub-scales and 50 items. The instructional leadership behaviours sub-scales of school principals are as follows: (1) *determination and sharing of school purposes*, (2) *management of curriculum and the teaching process*, (3) *evaluation of teaching process and students*, (4) *teacher support and development* and (5) *creation of regular teaching-learning environment and climate*. The Cronbach’s alpha level of the scale was calculated as .95. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy result was found as .851 and the Bartlett test result was found as $\chi^2 = 544,196$ ($p = .000$). These results show that there is a strong correlation amongst the items. In light of the data obtained, it can be said that “the instructional leadership behaviours of school principals scale” is both reliable and valid to be used in the current study.

Procedure

The main purpose of this study is to analyse the correlation between school principals’ instructional leadership behaviours and teachers’ organisational trust perceptions and the prediction level of instructional leadership for organisational trust. In this study, the correlative investigation modelling was employed to determine instructional leadership of school principals and its correlation to teachers’ organisational trust.

Analysis of the Data

The data collected for this study were analysed by using the Pearson moment’s correlation coefficient analysis and the step-wise regression analysis. The Pearson moment’s correlation coefficient was used in order to determine the correlation between variables and the regression analysis was used for the determination of the prediction level of instructional leadership behaviours of school principals for teachers’ organisational trust perceptions.

Findings

In this part of the study, the correlation between school principals’ instructional leadership behaviours and teachers’ organisational trust perceptions and the prediction level of

instructional leadership behaviours of school principals for teachers' organisational trust are given.

Correlation between School Principals' Instructional Leadership Behaviours and Teachers' Organisational Trust Perceptions

The correlation between instructional leadership behaviours of school principals and teachers' organisational trust perceptions is given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Correlations Matrix of Instructional Leadership Behaviours of School Principals for Teachers' Organisational Trust Perceptions

Instructional Leadership Sub-Scales	Trust Towards Administrators	Trust Towards Colleagues	Trust Towards Shareholders
Determination and Sharing of School Purpose	,668**	,501**	,535**
Management of Curriculum and the Teaching Process	,691**	,474**	,571**
Evaluation of Teaching Process and Students	,941**	,625**	,593**
Teacher Support and Development	,670**	,991**	,619**
Creation of Regular Teaching-Learning Environment and Climate	,605**	,465**	,960**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

In order to determine the correlation between elementary school principals' instructional leadership behaviours and teachers' organisational trust perceptions, the Pearson moment's correlation coefficient analysis was employed. According to the results of the study, there is a significant positive high correlation between "determination and sharing of school purposes" sub-scale of the instructional leadership and teachers' organisational trust towards administrators ($r = ,668, p < .01$), trust towards colleagues ($r = ,501, p < .01$) and trust towards shareholders ($r = ,535, p < .01$). It was also found out a significant positive correlation between "management of curriculum and the teaching process" sub-scale of the instructional leadership scale and teachers' trust towards administrators ($r = ,691, p < .01$), trust towards colleagues ($r = ,474, p < .01$) and trust towards shareholders ($r = ,571, p < .01$). Similarly, a significant positive correlation was found between "evaluation of teaching process and students" and teachers' organisational trust towards administrators ($r = ,941, p < .01$), trust towards colleagues ($r = ,625, p < .01$) and trust towards shareholders ($r = ,593, p < .01$).

On the other hand, it was found out that there was a high level of significant correlation between "teacher support and development" sub-scale and teachers' trust towards administrators ($r = ,670, p < .01$), trust towards colleagues ($r = ,991, p < .01$) and trust towards shareholders ($r = ,619, p < .01$). Lastly, it was found out a high level of significant correlation between "creation of regular teaching-learning environment and process" sub-scale and teachers' organisational trust towards administrators ($r = ,605, p < .01$), trust towards

colleagues ($r = .465, p < .01$) and trust towards shareholders ($r = .960, p < .01$). Based on the data gathered above, it can be stated that there is a significant positive and high level of correlation between instructional leadership behaviours of school principals and teachers' organisational trust perceptions. When principals demonstrate instructional leadership behaviours in their schools, teachers feel more organisational trust towards their administrators, colleagues and shareholders at school.

Prediction Level of School Principals' Instructional Leadership Behaviours for Teachers' Organisational Trust Perceptions

In order to determine the prediction level of instructional leadership of elementary school principals for teachers' organisational trust perceptions, the step-wise regression analysis was used in the study. The instructional leadership behaviours of the school principals were taken as the dependent variable and the organisational trust perceptions of teachers were taken as the independent variable in the study. The result for the prediction level of instructional leadership behaviours of school principals for teachers' organisational trust perceptions is given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Prediction of Instructional Leadership Behaviours of School Principals for Teachers' Organisational Trust Perceptions

Model		B	SE	β	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	38,196	4,825		7,917	,000
	Organisational Trust	1,969	,058	,925	33,944	,000

Note: $R = .925, R^2 = .857, F(1,193) = 1152.2, p = .000$

It is observed in Table 2 that, all of the predictive variables (instructional leadership behaviours of schools principals) included in the study correlate significantly with the teachers' organisational trust perceptions ($R = .925, R^2 = .857, p < .001$). Moreover, it is observed that the instructional leadership behaviours variable accounts for 85% of the total variance in organisational trust of elementary school teachers. According to the results of the t test regarding the significance of the regression coefficients, it is observed that the instructional leadership behaviours variable is a significant predictor of organisational trust perceptions of elementary school teachers.

Conclusions and Discussion

Leadership remains an elusive but important factor in organisational life of schools (Bass, 1985; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Hoy & Forsyth, 1986). Because of its complex nature, perspectives and definitions of leadership vary widely (Bennis, 1989; Yukl, 2002). There are studies in the literature which consist of the correlation between leadership and some other variables. One of these variables which is related with leadership is the organizational trust. Although it is mostly stated that there is a significant correlation between instructional leadership and organisational trust, any research trying to determine

this correlation has not been carried out so far. Since trust is a crucial element in organisational behaviour (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1984), the development of group relations and interpersonal relations are considered to be very important (Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2002; Yilmaz, 2008).

Academic success is higher in schools where trust feel amongst teachers is dominated (Yilmaz, 2008). Trust was found as a crucial factor in most organisations, including the school organisation. According to Hoy and Miskel (2008), trust resembles to climate. So, no one can think on that without needing it. Trust of teachers towards administrators, shareholders and the colleagues are very important since these make the cooperation easier (Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Çelik, 2009), increase the openness (Hoffman et al., 1994), sustain the group loyalty (Zand, 1997), and develop the student achievement (Hoy, 2002; Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

In this study, it was found out that the instructional leadership behaviours of school principals correlate significantly with the organisational trust of teachers. According to the results of the study, the instructional leadership behaviours of school principals are positively related to teachers' trust towards administrators, colleagues and the shareholders at school. Leadership and trust are both significant features of life in schools. Sergiovanni (1992) asserts that trust is very important for school principals' leadership. Similarly, Hoy, Tarter and Kottkamp (1991), Hoy and Sabo (1998), Hoy, Smith and Sweetland (2002) carried out crucial studies which reflected on the emphasis of trust on school principals' leadership power. Other organisational researchers such as Bennis (1989), Ouchi (1981) and Zand (1997) concluded that trust is an important predictor of leadership in different organisations. The results of this study are consisted with the theoretical foundations on which it was built. Factors of instructional leadership behaviours are associated with organisational trust.

Teachers' organisational trust perceptions are shaped by effective leadership behaviours of school principals (Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2002; Erden & Erden, 2009; Yilmaz, 2004; Turan, 2001; Demircan & Ceylan, 2003; Yilmaz, 2006). The results obtained in the literature supported the related findings of the current study. Thus, it can be clearly stated that the instructional leadership behaviours of school principals are positively related in predictable ways to organisational trust perceptions of teachers in administrators, colleagues and shareholders.

The principals' behaviours, the instructional leadership behaviours in particular, are also instrumental in developing an atmosphere of trust amongst teachers at school. Principals who demonstrate instructional leadership behaviours and who are persuasive, work effectively with the employees promote organisational trust amongst teachers. Although academic emphasis, institutional integrity, and consideration are related to trust in colleagues, it is morale and principal influence that combine to provide the best explanation of the organisational trust of elementary school teachers (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991). This situation also affects teachers' job satisfaction, occupational success, organisational behaviour types, and relations both with their colleagues and administrators positively at school (Noll, 2007). On the other hand, it decreases unhappiness, job dissatisfaction, organisational conflict, leaving of the organisation. According to Yilmaz (2008), since these kinds of teachers have positive attitudes towards their organisation, colleagues and administrators, they tend to stay longer in the organisation and generally do not think about leaving the organisation. Teachers having the feel of organisational trust in their schools try hard to do their duties, help the staff and collaborate with them, and work voluntarily whose principals demonstrate strong instructional leadership behaviours in their schools.

The correlation analysis shows the important role of instructional leadership behaviours of school principals in developing a climate of trust amongst teachers at school. In this sense, Hoy, Tarter and Kottkamp (1991) assure that it is susceptible that effective principals are not only intellectual leaders in their schools, but they are also colleagues who serve and support their teachers.

According to the results of the study, instructional leadership of school principals and organisational trust of teachers are significantly related with each other. The principals, who demonstrate dynamic instructional leadership behaviours are supportive of teachers, and yet, provide direction to teachers and maintain high levels of performance (Yılmaz, 2004). Teachers who work with principals demonstrating instructional leadership behaviours are voluntarily committed to teaching and learning at school. Such school principals set high, but achievable goals both for students and teachers. They also maintain high standards for student performance, and the learning environment is orderly and serious. Teachers are enthusiastic about their work, and proud of their school. Finally, an integrative theme of organisational trust runs through the integration of a healthy school. Teachers come to trust to each other, the school principal and the shareholders (Morphet, Johns & Reller, 1967; Williams & Hoy, 1973; Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991; Hoy & Forsyth, 1991; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). As far as the school principals' instructional leadership behaviours increase, the perceptions of organisational trust of teachers towards their administrators, colleagues and shareholders increase at the same level.

As a result of this study, in which the correlation between the instructional leadership behaviours of school principals and teachers' organisational trust perceptions was examined, the following suggestions can be given depending on the findings obtained in the research:

1. School principals should take seminars and courses on the instructional leadership both theoretically and practically in order to better apply instructional leadership behaviours at school.
2. The condition of schools should be provided in order to make the school principals demonstrate the instructional leadership behaviours better at school.
3. Regulations of the Ministry of National Education (MEB in Turkish) should be revised and the necessary changes should be made in the related regulations in order to make the school principals demonstrate the instructional leadership behaviours better at school.
4. School principals should do arrangements which will increase teachers' organisational trust and they should also be judicious in their managerial applications at school. They should also try hard to create a culture of trust amongst teachers at school.
5. School principals should create opportunities for teachers to provide their knowledge and practices by encouraging cooperation and providing social environments and they should also behave consistently in their actions and statements towards the teachers.
6. Similar studies on instructional leadership can be carried out by considering other variables such as locus of control, organisational citizenship, organisational justice, etc.

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