

## An Investigation on Work-Related Behaviors and Perceptions of School Quality Management Culture of K-12 Teachers

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**ABSTRACT** The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers' work-related behaviors and perceptions of school quality management culture. A total of 266 teachers working at primary and secondary schools in Izmir city center participated in the study. Work-related behavior and experience patterns scale, the school quality management culture survey, and a questionnaire form for specifying demographical characteristics of teachers were employed in the study. The canonical correlation analyses applied to the data set showed that the sub-dimensions of Striving for Perfection and Continuous Improvement stood out among others. It is considered that with the effect of competition as well, continuous development has been prominent at schools and this has led teachers to efforts to achieve perfection by putting pressure on them.

### INTRODUCTION

Having great significance in raising necessary and qualified labor force required for catching up with today's global environment of competition, education (Milner and Khoza 2008) is a long-term process arranged so as to contribute to developing individuals' behaviors, skills, and abilities and to help them lead better lives (Mirowsky and Ross 2003). Within this process, it is extremely important to make necessary arrangements to encourage well-educated individuals to work as teachers in order for students to be provided with high-quality education in addition to efforts toward improving schools, institutions of programmed education (OECD 2005). In the scope of these arrangements, attempts at creating a positive working environment appropriate for the professional role of a teacher come to the forefront (Conley and Muncy 1999).

Due to the importance of teaching as a profession, a great variety of studies have been carried out in order to determine present and candidate teachers' opinions and attitudes toward their occupation (Cetinkaya 2009). Teachers' attitudes and behaviors are extremely important criteria for the quality of education they provide (Tsigrilis et al. 2006). The profession of teaching is a

challenging and demanding occupation. The main reason behind this is that teachers are faced with substantial pressure and demands on their individual energy and abilities (Kieschke and Schaarschmidt 2008). Intense pressure, continuous stress, and the consequent "job burnout syndrome" that generally come along with work attract the attention of experts more intensively as a research topic today (Muszalska et al. 2007).

In modern society, teachers are perceived as individuals who are responsible for establishing the connection between schools and families, undertaking multiple missions as teachers, educators of morals, and creators of character. Teachers who cannot meet these expectations are evaluated as incompetent, accepted as unsuccessful, and even accused of malpractice (Fejgin et al. 1995). Such cases also lead to breakdowns in relations of teachers with their students and trigger job burnout (Brudnik 2009). For organizations, burn-out bears critical problems such as a decrease in individuals' performance at work, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Halbesleben and Buckley 2004).

Within the scope of the arrangements done in the field of education, one of the most significant factors is school culture (Zhu et al. 2011). School culture, the fundamental element for exhibiting common behavior and attitudes at schools, is the product of interaction among teachers, managers, students, and assisting staff (Firat 2010). Thus, each school is separated from the others by its unique culture (Sisman et al. 2010). In his study Demirtas (2010) states that school culture forms the main characteristic of a school, is effective in increasing motivation

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of teachers and students for educating-learning and improves in-school cooperation and quality. In addition, attempts to increase quality at educational institutions also contribute to the development and adaptation of schools to dynamic environment conditions (Ozevren 2000).

Another factor influencing quality at schools is the relationship between the existing culture and the quality management culture at schools. Inconsistencies in this regard bring about failure and problems (Detert et al. 2003). It is only possible to overcome such problems in education by increasing the number of schools that have healthy quality management. A healthy school should provide teachers with the necessary environment to carry out their studies efficiently and face internal and external environment conditions fearlessly (Tsui and Cheng 1999).

Individuals' behaviors toward their profession directly affect the power and unity of value for the organization of which they are members (Shepherd 1996). Therefore, teacher health and teachers' behaviors toward their profession have an important place among the problems faced at institutions of education (Gencer et al. 2010). From this point of view, determining the relationship between teachers' work-related behaviors and perceptions of school quality management culture was the aim of this study.

## METHODS

### Participants

A total of 266 teachers working at eight different primary and secondary schools operating under Izmir Provincial Directorate of National Education participated in the study voluntarily. The average professional experience of the teachers was 17.11 years and 197 (74.1%) of them were females while 69 (25.9%) were males. The average age of participating teachers was calculated as 37.21 ( $SD=8.91$ ). One hundred twenty-seven (47.7%) of the teachers work at state schools while 139 (52.3%) work at private schools.

### Data Collection Instrument

#### *The School Quality Management Culture Survey (SQMCS)*

SQMCS, developed by Detert et al. (2003) in order to determine the beliefs, fundamental val-

ues, and behavior concerning quality culture at schools, was adapted into Turkish by Kiremitci and Gencer (2014). The measurement instrument, consisting of 9 sub-dimensions and a total of 31 items, is responded over a 5 point Likert scale from 1=*strongly disagree* to 5=*strongly agree*. In the adaptation study, internal consistency coefficients of the items forming the measurement instrument were found to range between .71 and .89 (Kiremitci and Gencer 2014).

#### *Work-Related Behavior and Experience Patterns Scale*

The Work-Related Behavior and Experience Pattern Scale, which was developed by Schaa-schmidt and Fischer (1997) in order to determine individual psycho-social behavior and experiences, was adapted to Turkish by Gencer et al. (2010). The scale, consisting of 66 items and 11 sub-dimensions describing work-related attitudes, experience, and opinions, is responded over a 5 point Likert scale (from "I totally agree [5]" to "I don't agree at all [1]"). In the adaptation study into Turkish, which was carried out with the participation of teachers, internal consistency coefficients of the items of the scale ranged between .72 and .85 (Gencer et al. 2010).

### Procedure of Study and Analysis

Before starting data collection for the study, the required written permissions were taken from Izmir Provincial Directorate of National Education and the managing boards of the practice schools were informed about the procedures. In the implementation of the study, which was based on voluntary participation, researchers informed the participating teachers about the purpose and the implementation process of the study. The implementation did not require personal identification details of the teachers and was completed in approximately 20 minutes.

The data set obtained from the participation of the teachers in the study was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 13.0 statistics programs. The data set was subjected to canonical correlation analysis and it aimed at determining a possible relationship between teachers' School Quality Management Culture perceptions and Work-Related Behaviors. In the statistical analyses carried out, the level of significance was taken as  $p<.05$ .

## RESULTS

As a result of the analyses applied on the data set obtained from the participating teachers, it was found that the Collaboration sub-dimension had the highest average score in the School Quality Management Culture data set (Mean=4.31±.56), while it was the Striving for Perfection sub-dimension in the Work-Related Behavior data set (Mean=24.02±3.77). Table 1 displays the findings.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics for school quality management culture and work-related behavior subscales**

	Mean	Sd.
<i>School Quality Management Culture</i>		
Shared vision	3.93	.69
Customer focus	2.64	1.08
Long-term focus	2.78	.72
Continuous improvement	4.19	.65
Teacher involvement	4.00	.58
Collaboration	4.31	.56
Data-based decision-making	3.43	.72
Systems focus	3.88	.67
Quality at same cost	4.17	.65
<i>Work-Related Behavior</i>		
Subjective significance of work	20.36	4.23
Professional ambition	20.75	4.21
Tendency to exert	19.93	3.90
Striving for perfection	24.02	3.77
Emotional distancing	17.30	3.42
Resignation tendencies	13.83	3.93
Offensive coping with problems	22.20	3.79
Balance and mental stability	21.21	3.98
Satisfaction with work	23.16	3.60
Satisfaction with life	22.59	3.76
Experience of social support	22.20	3.31

Within the scope of the canonical correlation analysis aiming at revealing the relationships between School Quality Management Culture and Work-Related Behavior data sets, nine different canonical pairs were created and canonical coefficients were calculated. The analyses showed that the first two canonical functions of the canonical pairs were statistically significant. For the canonical functions that were found to be significant,  $R^2$  value of the first one was .494 ( $p < .01$ ), while  $R^2$  value of the second was .168 ( $p < .05$ ). Table 2 gives the details.

In the event of obtaining more than one significant function in the canonical correlation analyses, the redundancy index detected variance rate and canonical weight obtained from the significant functions should be considered in order to decide which one is to be interpreted

(Hair et al. 1998). Considering the Dependent and Independent data sets' rates of expressing their own canonical variable set (Shared Variance) and the other canonical variable set (Redundancy), it is seen that among the first two functions determined to be significant, the first function has a higher percentage of expression than the second. Table 3 presents the details.

Finally, within the scope of the first canonical function that was found statistically significant and had the highest percentage of expression, canonical and cross loadings of sub-dimensions were examined. As can be seen in Table 4, the Continuous Improvement (canonical loading = -.817, cross loading = -.574) sub-dimension in the school quality management culture and the Striving for Perfection (canonical loading = -.815, cross loading = -.572) sub-dimension in the work-related behavior data set had noticeable values.

## DISCUSSION

It has been found in the examination of the results obtained that the Striving for Perfection sub-dimension among teachers' work related behaviors and the Continuous Improvement sub-dimension among teachers' perceptions of quality management culture were prominent and had a significant canonical relationship. The reason for this may be the fact that teachers are forced by school management to improve quality and maintain continuous development at schools; therefore they have to strive for perfection due to various concerns.

As the change and development targeted for schools may be perceived as reconstructing all of the implementations, objectives, and organizational structure by employees, it should also be considered as the change in the organizational culture that consists of acceptances, values, and beliefs formed by the roles in the organization and the rules (Ozden 2000). The participation of teachers in this process of change is the most fundamental component of success. In this process, however, while the management that defends and improves change is praised more, teachers, who are the implementers of this change, have to pay the price for any possible failure that occurs (Beycioglu and Aslan 2010).

The fact that the process of change and improvement includes many factors that should be considered may cause teachers to hesitate to participate in the process. In order to eliminate this hesitation, the institutional climate and cul-

**Table 2: Results for the canonical correlation analysis**

	<i>Wilk's Lambda</i>	<i>Chi-square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Canonical correlations</i>	<i>Canonical R<sup>2</sup></i>
U1-V1	.328	283.863	99.000	.000	.703	.494
U2-V2	.648	110.604	80.000	.013	.410	.168
U3-V3	.778	63.834	63.000	.447	.305	.093
U4-V4	.858	39.026	48.000	.819	.284	.080
U5-V5	.933	17.654	35.000	.994	.170	.028
U6-V6	.961	10.231	24.000	.994	.148	.021
U7-V7	.982	4.622	15.000	.995	.102	.010
U8-V8	.992	1.939	8.000	.983	.072	.005
U9-V9	.998	.620	3.000	.892	.049	.002

**Table 3: Redundancy analysis for meaningful canonical functions of dependent and independent variables**

<i>Standardized variance of the dependent variables explained by (School Quality Management Culture)</i>				
<i>Canonical function</i>	<i>Their own canonical variate (shared variance)</i>		<i>The opposite canonical variate (redundancy)</i>	
	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage</i>
Function 1**	.289	.289	.143	.143
Function 2*	.125	.414	.021	.164
Function 3	.072	.486	.007	.171
Function 4	.088	.574	.007	.178
Function 5	.092	.666	.003	.181
Function 6	.106	.772	.002	.183
Function 7	.066	.838	.001	.184
Function 8	.086	.924	.000	.184
Function 9	.075	.999	.000	.184
<i>Standardized variance of the independent variables explained by (Work-Related Behavior)</i>				
<i>Canonical function</i>	<i>Their own canonical variate (shared variance)</i>		<i>The opposite canonical variate (redundancy)</i>	
	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage</i>
Function 1**	.314	.314	.155	.155
Function 2*	.083	.397	.014	.169
Function 3	.061	.458	.006	.175
Function 4	.051	.509	.004	.179
Function 5	.069	.578	.002	.181
Function 6	.058	.636	.001	.182
Function 7	.041	.677	.000	.182
Function 8	.084	.761	.000	.182
Function 9	.072	.833	.000	.182

\*\*p&lt;.01, \*p&lt;.05

ture of the school and the personal interest and professional attitudes of the teachers are of importance.

At the management level that is predominant within the continuous development model followed by schools, total quality management, teacher competencies, and teacher performance are evaluated (Gokyer 2011). Therefore, school

management can frequently force teachers into competition and perfectionism so that they can catch up with the pace of the change.

The efforts for perfectionism, which affect individuals' work-related behavior and may lead them to experience burn-out syndrome as result of negative practices and occurrences (Ardic and Polatci 2009), can be defined as a person's set-

**Table 4: Canonical loadings and cross loadings for the meaningful first canonical functions of dependent and independent variable**

	<i>Canonical loadings</i>	<i>Cross-loadings</i>
<i>School Quality Management</i>		
Culture Shared vision	-.747	-.525
Customer focus	-.184	-.129
Long-term focus	.072	.050
Continuous improvement	-.817	-.574
Teacher involvement	-.248	-.174
Collaboration	-.522	-.367
Data-based decision-making	-.604	-.424
Systems focus	-.776	-.545
Quality at same cost	-.202	-.142
<i>Work-Related Behavior</i>		
Subjective significance of work	-.316	-.222
Professional ambition	-.586	-.411
Tendency to exert	-.455	-.320
Striving for perfection	-.815	-.572
Emotional distancing	.263	.185
Resignation tendencies	.468	.329
Offensive coping with problems	-.642	-.451
Balance and mental stability	-.388	-.273
Satisfaction with work	-.792	-.556
Satisfaction with life	-.503	-.353
Experience of social support	-.636	-.447

ting challenging objectives on his/her individual achievement and behaviors and his/her expectation to reach these objectives (Slaney et al. 2002). It is known that individuals with perfectionist behavior have personal characteristics that can be considered negative such as difficulty in making decisions, repetition and correction, postponing, avoidance, over-planning, organization and arrangement in order, continuous supervision, and receiving confirmation and trying to change others (Turhan 2013). Perfectionism adversely affects teachers' participation in academic studies concerning their professional and personal development and can even bring them to the point of giving up (Cumaoglu and Coskun 2012).

In addition to all of these considerations, the fact that reforms in education realized with the aim of responding to economic needs intensified and accelerated in Turkey in the early 2000s, like in all other parts of the world (Akpinar and Aydin 2007), is noticeable as a multidimensional attempt to increase total quality in schools.

Moreover, attempts for obtaining the most efficiency in the shortest time in education may cause pressure on school management boards that are responsible for the continuity and evalu-

ation of the process. Parallel with this, in order to lessen the pressure and to keep the process from being interrupted, school managers supervise teachers continuously and subject them to performance evaluations. This situation may challenge teachers in fulfilling the duties for which they are responsible in a perfectionist understanding.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is considered that the relationship between teachers' perceptions of school quality management culture and their behaviors towards the profession of teaching focus on the attempt of continuous development and perfectionism due to the interaction between school management and teachers as well as the intensity of the reforms in terms of both timing and content.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following these results obtained from the study and their interpretations, some recommendations are given for the future studies in the field.

The attempts and implementations conducted under the name of reform in schools should be completed in broad terms as soon as possible and the results obtained should be reported. This will facilitate determining the strong and weak sides of the implementations developed for school management and learning practices and specifying the measurements to be taken.

Establishment of management quality culture in the field of education is extremely important for both the managers' fulfillment of their responsibilities and the removal of problems that teachers might face during their work. Therefore, total quality management principles should be taken into consideration in the development and arrangement of the existing school quality management culture.

In addition to such attempts to arrange the quality management culture at schools, teachers' existing behavior patterns toward their profession should be determined at certain intervals. It would be appropriate to ask for teachers' opinions on how to improve teachers' specified behavioral patterns. These attempts may have a positive contribution to efforts for correcting the recent negative approach to the profession of teaching.

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