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Opinions of Provincial Executives on Readiness for Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services

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ABSTRACT This research was conducted in order to learn what provincial executives at the Ministry of National Education (MEB) think of the Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services and to determine whether or not these opinions differed by geographic region. The general screening method attempted to determine the relationship between the provincial education directors, district education directors, and provincial heads of education. A survey, developed by the researcher, was used as the data collection tool and the SPSS package program was used to analyze the measurement tools. Even though provincial directors of national education, provincial administrative of education, and district national education directors oppose the center's transfer of authority completely, they agree somewhat that authority should partially be transferred. In the light of the findings, it is necessary to look at the authority transfer by taking regional differences into account.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, concepts of management and human nature have been paired together, with human beings in the position of either manager or managed as a requirement of living together. The managers as well as the managed have put forward a number of theories, producing various myths about management, and have struggled to find a place of application for these theories. A lot of development -ranging from advice given to rulers by religious leaders, classical theories, and other managerial theories that were accepted as contemporary, were seen and discussed in the science and conception of management (Dilci 2012; Eren 2012; Demirkasimoglu 2014).

Certain factors, such as making people more satisfied and providing better quality and productive services, can be found in the essence of changes and developments taking place in management as a concept. Adopting and implementing a better managerial concept has come into prominence. The educational system is no exception to this change, and structural changes, like the transfer of authority in education management, appears at the top of the agenda (Gulsen 2005; Lunenburg and Ornstein 2013; Kizilcelik 2015).

Research was conducted with the aim of learning the opinions of personnel working in different departments of the related Turkish ministry on the localization of educational services management. This research showed that ministry employees believe that localization in management is inevitable, and they generally find the localization to be applicable in spite of some problems and differences. Apart from issues such as the identification of the objectives and policies of the national education system and determination of general principles in education and training programs, the management of educational resources by a local board has been shown to strengthen local governments for providing high-quality education. The need to establish units that will become effective at a school level were also indicated in research (Usluel 1995; Koksal 1997; Duman 1998; Bucak 2000; Bozan 2002; Gulsen 2005; Lee 2009; Gomleksiz and Curo 2011, Keles 2011).

Similar studies were also conducted outside of Turkey. Inconveniencies, such as encountering interdisciplinary problems in the localization to be carried out, tendencies of each discipline to use their own managerial language, potential clashes between groups that want power, and the center's desire to keep some authorities as in our country, were emphasized in these research studies. The establishment of national education commissions, as in similar research conducted in Turkey, was seen to be important and the need to strengthen the management of the school by effective use of educational systems and technology through these commissions was noted

in this research. It was emphasized that privatization and professional teaching in education would positively affect the localization, and that productivity in education would increase by strengthening school-based local management and personnel would actively and effectively participate in the management since they would feel more responsible due to localization (Conyers 1984; Hurst 1985; Bacharach 1990; Boyd 1990; Cooper 1990; Ovando 2001; Tomlinson 2002; Haynes et al. 2003; Lee et al. 2003; Dagli 2013; Sahin 2013).

In some part of the research dealing with the effect of centralized education, it was emphasized that the present education system has become a huge machine or an organism because its system was strict, centralized, and bureaucratic, and it lost its ability to think and to act. The study described the system through the analogy of a huge octopus whose suckers became desensitized with its current state, and whose authority and responsibility, located in the central organization for remediating the system, should be transferred to the provincial units to a certain extent (Koksal 1997; Yildiz 2008; Bucak 2000; TOBB 2000; Bozan 2002; TUSIAD 2002; MEB 2013; OECD 2013; TUIK 2013).

For those who think that a huge organization in educational services is almost impossible to manage and thus claim that educational services should be managed locally in order to increase effectiveness, participation, and productivity, there are also those who consider education to be a task of the state and claim that it should strictly be attached to centralized management. In addition, if the political authorities remove the structural dilemmas and disadvantages and make regulations that will ensure full participation, there are also those who say conditionally 'yes' to centralized educational services management (TOBB 2000; Moses 2001; TUSIAD 2002; Gulsen 2005; Yildiz, 2008).

While these kinds of discussions take place on education systems, it is also seen that state control of the educational systems in many developed countries have been transferred from national organizations over to regional organizations (Bacharach 1990; Boyd 1990; Gulsen 2005; Hoy and Miskel 2012; Lunenburg and Ornstein 2013; RG 2014). This transfer of authority, which may be termed localization or decentralization in education, does not only mean the center's transfer of its supervision and control power, but should also imply the transfer of its finan-

cial responsibilities. Regional resources can better be mobilized, and a broader participation base for making education decisions can be created by such a transfer of authority (Gulsen 2005; Hoy and Miskel 2012; Lunenburg and Ornstein 2013; Robbins and Judge 2013).

Top-level managers tend to be more influential in the adoption of transformation philosophies in organizations similar to the transfer of authority in education and to the creation of organizational culture (Gulsen 2005; Bolman and Deal 2013; Robbins and Judge 2013; Turan and Bektas 2013; Taskin 2014; Aytac 2015). Even though research on the localization of educational services was conducted with the aim of learning the opinions of employees working at various levels within the ministry, there was no research on the opinions of top-level managers according to the geographical regions they served. Therefore, it is important to discover what the opinions of Provincial Directors of National Education, Provincial Heads of Education, and District National Education Directors, who are the most senior managers in the provincial organization of MEB, are on the "Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services" and to learn whether or not there are any differences in their opinions at a geographical level.

Purpose of the Research

This research was conducted in order to learn what provincial executives at the Ministry of National Education (MEB) think about the transfer of authority in the management of educational services, and to determine whether or not these opinions differed by the geographic regions these people served.

METHODOLOGY

A general screening method was used to conduct this research. The research attempted to determine the relationship between the provincial education directors, district education directors, and provincial heads of education, who are the most senior executives working under the Ministry of Education. The study also tried to determine the sample group's opinions on the transfer of authority in the management of educational services in accordance with the geographical regions in which they serve. This data is considered an adequate descriptor of the situ-

ation, since these determinations were based on the opinions of the executives.

Population and Sampling

The provincial directors of national education, the provincial heads of education, and the district national education directors of 81 provinces throughout Turkey constituted the entire population of the study.

The provincial directors of national education and the provincial heads of education of 81 provinces were taken as the sample for this research. District national education directors were identified by a *stratified sampling method* based on the number of schools in the provinces from seven geographical regions. A total of 169 district national education directors from 27 provinces in seven geographical regions, chosen from provinces with the most and least numbers of schools from each geographic region and from a third province selected randomly, were taken as the sample (Buyukozturk et al. 2013; MEB 2013).

Data Collection Tools

In this research, a five-point Likert scale developed by the researcher in 2005 with a total variance explanation rate of 55 percent, and a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .82, was used as a data collection tool to measure seven factors. Only two dimensions of this scale were addressed in the context of this research. While the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the "Transfer of Authority" dimension was found to be .81, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the "Structure of Education Management" dimension was .84. These ratios prove the scale's reliability (Gulsen 2005; Buyukozturk et al. 2013).

Relevant local and foreign literature was firstly examined in the preparation of the data collection tool, and the conditions, which are included in the measurement tool for the educational process, were also identified from the experts' opinions. Of the surveys conducted, 98.76 percent of them were returned from provincial directors of national education, and 100 percent of them were returned from provincial heads of education and district national education directors. In total, out of the 331 surveys that were sent to the sampling group, 330 of them (99.70%) were returned.

With reference to the assumption that ranges in the scale that the sampling group expressed

their opinions were equal, weights allotted to the degrees of involvement for the propositions in the scale and their limits are determined as such: "1) Disagree (1.00-1.80), 2) Least Agree (1.81-2.60), 3) Reasonably Agree (2.61-3.40), 4) Quite Agree (3.41-4.20), 5) Completely Agree (4.21-5.00)."

Data Analysis and Interpretation

An SPSS package software program was used in the analysis of the data collected through measurement tools. Frequency (f), percentage (%), arithmetic mean ($\overline{X}$), and standard deviation (sd) helped to determine the directors' personal individual characteristics and opinions using the above-mentioned package software. Variance analysis was used to determine whether or not there were any differences of opinion between the provincial directors of national education, the provincial heads of education, and the district national education directors, according to the variable of geographical regions. The significance level was taken as 0.05 in order to test the differences. Opinions were addressed and analyzed in two different dimensions: "transfer of authority," and "structure of educational management."

FINDINGS

The research findings and the interpretations based on them are included in this section. Findings are discussed in two sections. In the first section, opinions of the managers are compared and in the second section, their opinions are compared according to the geographical regions in which they serve. In the first section, primarily, the opinions of managers were compared under two sub-dimensions.

The managers' opinions on provincial organization in the Ministry of Education on "Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services" are firstly compared in terms of "Transfer of Authority." The analysis results related to the managers' opinions on the transfer of authority are shown in Table 1.

As can be seen from Table 1, differences exist in the groups' opinions when the arithmetic mean related to the opinions of managers of provincial organizations in MEB, with different positions, related to the "Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services in Tur-

Table 1: Opinions of managers of provincial organization in MEB on "Transfer of Authority" in the management of educational services according to their position

	Position	N	X	sd	F	p	Significance
Authority Transfer	(1) Provincial Director of National Education	80	3.45	.41	3.452	0.033	2-3
	(2) Provincial Head of Educational Supervision	81	3.40	.41			
	(3) District National Education Director	169	3.54	.42			

key." According to the variance analysis conducted with the aim of determining whether these differences were significant, there was a significant difference (F=3.452, p<0.05) at a=0.05 between the opinions of provincial heads of education and district national education directors. Although they almost have the same opinions, district national education directors approach more positively the issue of authority transfer compared to provincial heads of education.

The opinions of the managers of provincial organization in the ministry of education on "Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services" were also compared in terms of the "Changes in Management Structure" dimension, and the analysis of the results is shown in Table 2.

As can be seen in Table 2, according to the results of the variance analysis, there was a significant difference (F=1.444, p<0.05) at a=0.05 between the opinions of the managers of provincial organizations in MEB, who serve in different positions, related to the "Structure of Educational Management" about the "Transfer of Authority in the Localized Management of Educational Services in Turkey." Although the managers serve in different positions, their opinions on the structure of educational management have similarities and, similarly, they positively approach the need for structural changes and localization of the management.

In this section of the research, the opinions of the managers of provincial organization in MEB on the "Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services in Turkey" were compared in two sub-categories. The managers of provincial organization were discussed in terms of the seven different geographical regions they serve. These include: (1) Marmara, (2) Aegean, (3) Mediterranean, (4) Central Anatolia, (5) the Black Sea, (6) Eastern Anatolia, and (7) South East Anatolia. The opinions of managers on transfer of authority concerning the management of educational services in Turkey were examined and compared separately.

Primarily, the opinions of managers of provincial organization in MEB on the "Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services in Turkey" were compared with the "transfer of authority" dimension. The managers were asked eight questions related to the transfer of authority and the overall arithmetic means were calculated. The results of the variance analysis of these comparisons are given in Table 3.

As can be seen in Table 3, according to the results of the variance analysis conducted to determining whether significant differences exist in the arithmetic means related to the opinions of managers in provincial organization of MEB, who serve different geographical regions, about the "Transfer of Authority in the Manage-

Table 2: Opinions of managers of provincial organization in MEB on "Structure of Educational Management" in the management of educational services according to their position

	Position	N	X	sd	F	p	Significance
Structure of Educational Management	(1) Provincial Director of National Education	80	4.11	.51	1.444	0.238	-
	(2) Provincial Head of Educational Supervision	81	4.17	.57			
	(3) District National Education Director	169	4.23	.54			

(-) symbol indicates that there was no significant difference (p>0.05).

Table 3: Comparison of the opinions of managers in provincial organization of MEB in terms of transfer of authority according to their position

	Geographical region	N	X	sd	F	p	Significance
Transfer of Authority	Marmara Region	49	3.54	.44	0.606	0.726	-
	Aegean Region	41	3.40	.40			
	Mediterranean Region	43	3.52	.47			
	Central Anatolian Region	53	3.50	.47			
	Black Sea Region	54	3.50	.40			
	Eastern Anatolian Region	54	3.45	.33			
	Southeast Anatolian Region	36	3.46	.44			

(-) symbol indicates that there was no significant difference (p>0.05).

ment of Educational Services," no significant differences (F=0.606, p<0.05) were seen at a=0.05.

In this section of the research, the opinions of the managers of provincial organization in MEB, who serve in different geographical regions, concerning the "Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services in Turkey," were compared in terms of the "structure of educational management." The managers were asked thirteen questions related to the structure of educational management and the overall arithmetic means were calculated. The results of the variance analysis of these comparisons are given in Table 4.

As can be seen in Table 4, according to the results of the variance analysis, no significant differences (F=0.414, p>0.05) were seen at a=0.05.

DISCUSSION

When the opinions of the managers in MEB provincial organization on the *"Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services"* were compared in terms of the *"Transfer of Authority,"* although provincial managers in the Ministry of Education opposed the center's complete transfer of authority in educational services management with almost the same ideas:

they "fairly" believed that it was necessary to transfer most of the authorities. Although the managers' opinions were similar, a significant difference was also found between the opinions of the provincial heads of education and those of the district national education directors (Gulsen 2005; Bolman and Deal 2013; Robbins and Judge 2013; Turan and Bektas 2013; Taskin 2014; Aytac, 2015). By looking at these results, it is clear that the positions that managers in the provincial organization of MEB hold might have affected their opinions about the transfer of authority depending on the localization of educational services (Usluel 1995; Koksal 1997; Duman 1998; Bucak 2000; Ovando 2001; Bozan 2002; Tomlinson 2002; Lee et al. 2003; Gulsen 2005).

When the opinions of the managers of provincial organization in the Ministry of Education on *"Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services"* were evaluated in terms of *"Changes in Management Structure,"* as it was seen in Table 2, although they serve in different positions, managers' opinions related to the structure of educational management were similar. They relatively agreed that changes in the managerial structure should be carried out, and similarly, they positively approached the structural changes towards localization. Their

Table 4: Comparison of the opinions of managers in provincial organization of MEB in terms of "Structure of Educational Management" according to the geographical region they serve

	Geographical region	N	X	sd	F	p	Significance
Structure of Educational Management	Marmara Region	49	4.19	.56	0.414	0.869	-
	Aegean Region	41	4.17	.51			
	Mediterranean Region	43	4.26	.61			
	Central Anatolian Region	53	4.22	.54			
	Black Sea Region	54	4.12	.44			
	Eastern Anatolian Region	54	4.16	.53			
	Southeast Anatolian Region	36	4.24	.63			

(-) symbol indicates that there was no significant difference (p>0.05).

positions in the province and possessing similar information due to their positions as managers in the province might have been part of why these similarities occurred. Managers at all levels in the personnel system of MEB possess similar education and culture levels. The proximity of these managers in terms of geographical location and their encounters with similar problems due to this proximity might also partially account for the similarity of their opinions. Therefore, the perspectives on structural evaluation in educational management were considered to have similarities (Gulsen 2005; Gulsen and Turhan, 2015).

As seen in the results of similar studies, changes will also force the structure of management to change, and it should be expected that members of local management would be equipped with more authority. This pressure could also have had an effect on managers' positive opinions (Bucak 2000; Bozan 2002; Gulsen 2005; Bolman and Deal 2013). With reference to these results, the positions that the managers in provincial organization of MEB currently hold influenced their opinions related to the transfer of authority depending upon the localization of educational services, but this influence did not make a statistically significant difference (Bacharach 1990; Koksal 1997; Duman 1998; Ovando 2001; Bozan 2002; Tomlinson 2002; Gulsen 2005).

When the opinions of managers in provincial organization of MEB were evaluated in terms of the geographical regions that they serve, almost all of the managers serving in different geographical regions approached the issue of "authority transfer" positively and in similar proportions as seen in Table 3. Even though there was no statistically significant difference, it is clear by looking at the arithmetic means that managers in the Marmara Region approached the transfer of authority a little more positively than did the managers in other regions. The reason for this might be that authority transfer is a general problem, and similar problems are encountered in all regions due to the presence of centralized authority. Managers, in line with the results of previous research conducted on this issue, think that they, as a province, will have the opportunity to obtain more authority through the localization of educational services, and that the transfer of authority would help resolve problems (Conyers 1984; Hurst 1985; Bacharach 1990; Bucak 2000; Bozan 2002; TUSIAD 2002; Gulsen

2005; Yildiz 2008, Bolman and Deal 2013). By looking at these results, it is clear that the different regions served by the managers of provincial organization in MEB did not differentiate their opinions on the transfer of authority towards localization.

When the opinions of the managers in provincial organization of MEB on the "Transfer of Authority in the Management of Educational Services in Turkey" were compared in terms of the "structure of educational management," it was seen as in Table 4 that even though they serve in different geographical locations, the managers' opinions on the "structure of educational management" were similar. These managers positively approached the structural changes towards localization in the same way. Despite the absence of statistically significant differences and similarities in their opinions, the managers in the Mediterranean region were also said to approach the changes related to the structure of educational management a little more positively in terms of arithmetic means in comparison with the managers working in other regions. This is because even though managers work in different geographical regions, the organizational structure of the system that they were included in consisted of the central and provincial organizations. All geographical locations outside the central organization were considered as provincial within the same system (Keles 2011). When considering similar research studies conducted on similar topics, perspectives on the educational management structure show resemblance (Ovando 2001; Bozan 2002; Tomlinson 2002; Lee et al. 2003; Gulsen 2005; Eren 2012; OECD 2013). In other words, the geographical region in which the managers serve did not have any significant affect on their opinions of the evaluation of the structure in educational management.

CONCLUSION

District national education directors approached the authority transfer more positively than provincial directors of national education and provincial heads of education did. District national education directors were likely to obtain more authority at the district level by the localization of educational services, and the transfer of authority might have affected their opinions. In the management systems in which centralized management is effective, such as district

national education directorates, in comparison with central organization, provincial directorates of national education, and provincial heads of education who all serve within the provincial directorates of national education, remained much more in the background. This might have caused district national education directors to give extra consideration to the transfer of authority. When the arithmetic means related to the opinions of the managers in provincial organization of MEB on the "structure of educational management" in the "Management of Educational Services in Turkey" were examined, it was clear that, despite having similar opinions, district national education directors positively approached the structure of educational management in comparison with the provincial directors of national education and the provincial heads of education did in this dimension. By looking at the arithmetic means, it can also be said that managers who serve in the Marmara Region approached the transfer of authority a little more positively than the managers in other regions did. For this reason, the managers' positive or negative experiences of the organizational structure showed similarities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggestions can be made by looking at the obtained results of the research:

Necessary legal regulations should be fulfilled immediately, since the transfer of authority in management by making legal changes was considered important in order to resolve many problems in the management of educational services in Turkey. In a more general sense, information seminars should be given to provincial managers and other stakeholders in education concerning the regulations to be made for local management of educational services. Prior to these regulations, the lawmakers need to obtain support from all relevant sectors when considering the adoption of the authority transfer in the management of educational services. New research should be conducted aiming to determine relevant sector workers' opinions (managers of central organizations, academicians, students, teachers, parents) on the local management of educational services.

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