

Characteristics of Diversity Leadership According to Teachers

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KEYWORDS Diversity Management. Leadership. Organizational Differences

ABSTRACT The objective of this study is to reveal how teachers define 'diversity leadership' and the characteristics a diversity leader should have. The study was conducted with a phenomenological method, one of the methods of qualitative research. The study group of the research consists of 25 voluntary teachers selected through convenience sampling method. Research data was collected using a semi-structured interview form and they were analyzed by means of content analysis technique, one of the qualitative data analysis techniques. In the study, the teachers were asked to define diversity leadership and list the characteristics of a diversity leader. As a result of the study, it was found that teachers made identifications similar to the definitions in the literature. It was further discovered that some of the characteristics required to be held by diversity leaders are peculiar to diversity leadership in particular, whereas some others also include general leadership traits.

INTRODUCTION

Today's organizations are required to keep pace with rapidly changing sociocultural, economic and technological developments in order to be able to continue their existence. Developments such as unionization, globalization in particular, brought along recent considerations in the structures and management activities of organizations. Due to the effect of globalization, borders among the countries have disappeared in organizational terms, thus making the organizations play the role of a multicultural structure. As for multiculturalism, it created a need to manage cultural, demographical and organizational diversities held by employees. In this sense, organizations have tried to make use of differences of the employees either to reach different masses or reveal all of the current potential. Whereas the concept of diversity emphasizes race, gender and ethnicity in the strict sense, it refers to all of the individual differences among people in a broader sense (Lewis et al. 2000). In view of Nkomo and Cox (1999), diversity is not only a situation to be described with just race or gender, but it also includes differences such as age, personal or organizational background, training, personality, lifestyle, sexual preference, geographical origin and period of office, position in the organization additionally.

Individual differences may be to the advantage or disadvantage of the organization in line with stereotypes or prejudices of directors or employees for individuals. It is closely related

with standpoints of employees and directors towards diversity whose differences are positive or negative. Those who take a bright view of diversity think that differences are essential for social development, acknowledging that such are natural. They are of the point that it is a social advantage to live in cooperation and harmony by maintaining and supporting diversity. On the contrary, those who take a dim view of diversity are of the opinion that differences will impair the integral structure of state, society and result in conflicts and that problems will be eliminated through assimilation of unaccepted differences (Polat 2015).

Human diversity is considered to be a phenomenon required to be managed in all aspects of life and it gains much more importance in organizational life. While the people gathering together to achieve organizational objectives such as performance, profitability, efficiency, try to adapt themselves to other workmates and organization on the one hand, they want to live through their differences (gender, age, disability) independently and they expect that all such differences are respected on the other (Survegil and Budak 2008).

Rapid changes in economic, social, political and technological domains are prompting today's people and organizations accordingly to keep pace with such change. This requires organizational directors to have information about many fields and make optimal use of human resources as well as other resources in order to be able to ensure organizational efficiency. In this

context, it can be said that the success of an organization is related to leading the employees towards objectives willingly. According to Karahan (2008), organizations will not be able to fulfill their objectives unless they prompt employees in a willing manner thereby affecting human resources, no matter how advanced the technologies they have are, which could include objective, structure, production type. Leadership attitude to be displayed by directors herein gains importance.

Leadership is the process of affecting, directing, motivating a group in line with common objectives and organizing the activities of the group under certain circumstances (Basaran 2004; Thomas 2004; Oguz 2010; Celik 2011). As for the leader, he/she is the person having the power of influence beyond being in mechanical (order, directive, and decree) harmony with pathfinders (Erdogan 2010).

The meaning of efficient leadership in the changing world has become a confusing issue in all types of organizations and sectors. It became one of the critical challenges for organizations to confront and adapt themselves with rapidly increasing differences of employees and customers (Chen and Velsor 1996). From the standpoint of Hopkins and Hopkins (1999), organizations are required to develop efficient diversity leaders in order to be able to successfully overcome such challenges, since leading diversity, rather than managing such, will be key factor for the organizations in 21st century to ensure superiority over other organizations.

Diversity is not a problem, which is required to be managed, on the contrary, it is an opportunity for individuals with cultural, racial and ethnic differences to reveal their creativity with the help of a *diversity leader*. In this regard, a diversity leader respects those employees with several differences in a diversity friendly manner and leads them in a fair and efficient way (Hopkins and Hopkins 1999).

According to Dreachslin (1999), diversity leadership is the strategy of creating sensitivity in the employees and clients against demographic variables and changing social attitudes. Diversity leadership requires respecting differences rather than putting up with differences and valuing them, thereby offering opportunities instead of raising difficulties. The key for success in diversity leadership is to have a flexible frame of mind. If a leader behaves in a fair, respectful

and sensitive manner to all of the employees, team spirit to ensure fulfillment of formidable, final objectives by the organization, would have been supported (Darden 2003).

From the view point of Chen and Velsor (1996), Behavioral Complexity and Leader-Member Exchange theories constitute the substructure of diversity leadership when it is considered with a leadership-oriented perspective. With regards to the behavioral complexity theory, an efficient leader should display any innovative, mediating, productive, directive, regulative, reflective, facilitative and consultative behaviors where appropriate (Javadi et al. 2013). With sociocultural differences of individuals within the organization, their technical skills, knowledge and capabilities may also vary. In this regard, the leader will also have to display different behaviors so that the needs and expectations of individuals with several organizational differences are fulfilled. Diversity leadership and behavioral complexity model are in a natural harmony since complexity is inevitably connected to diversity. When the complexity model is associated with social identities within the organization, it can be applied to diversity leadership (Chen and Velsor 1996).

As for the leader-member exchange theory, it conceptualizes the interaction as a process between the leader and follower (Winkler 2010). The theory focuses on vertical relations between a superior and subordinate, and sets forth that the leader will not be able to approach all of the subordinates with the same leadership style as the time, resource or power is limited in the organizations (Steiner 1997; Wayne et al. 1994; Quoted by Bolat 2011). With reference to leader member exchange theory, an efficient leadership process emerges when the leader and followers could have developed a mature relationship. Thus, both parties can utilize many advantages brought by such relation and partnership (Javadi et al. 2013). According to Chen and Velsor (1996), the Leader-Member exchange theory contributes in three ways to the concept of diversity leadership. The first of these is dyadic approach, focusing on the relation between the leader and the member. The difference of relations between the leader-member and the members among themselves is evaluated with this approach. The second contribution is related to the fact that relation formation behavior is at the core of leader-member exchange. To put the relations in the

center refers to functionalization of mutual respect, confidence and sense of responsibility between the leader and the member. The final contribution is the assessment of relations between internal and external groups to appear based on the relation levels of members with the leader. In this way, substantial perspectives can be gained for managing diversity and leading.

According to Dreachslin and Hobby (2008), even those organizations, which are most efficient culturally, are unable to reveal their potentials in full, without an efficient diversity leadership. Differences such as language, religion, cultural values, gender, race and ethnicity are not the reason for superiority or being underrated. Unless such diversity is understood and valued, it is likely that there occur inequalities within the organization and the services rendered therewith.

Considering the fact that education institutions are one of the organizations where the diversities are at maximum level, such diversities in the organizations are required to be assessed in a way to improve the quality of the education, increase the commitment of the teachers to the organizations and their job satisfaction and motivations and provide maximum benefit from their workforce. In other words, it is required to lead the diversities by considering them as an opportunity rather than managing them by perceiving them as a problem. At this point, the responsibility lies with the education managers because education directors take on a task to direct such diversities in the organization to the intended targets as an education leader. In this sense, the understanding of the teachers from the leadership of the diversities and determination of the features of the diversities in their perspective are important for leading the way for the education managers.

Objective of the Research

The objective of this research is to define diversity leadership in accordance with viewpoints of teachers and ascertain the qualifications of an efficient diversity leader.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted with phenomenology method, one of the qualitative research methods. Study group of the research consists of 25 voluntary teachers, working in Karasu District

of Sakarya Province, who were selected through convenience sampling method. The researcher chooses a close and easy to access case in this sampling method (Yildirim and Simsek 2000), the reason why this sampling is chosen is that they work in a region close to the researcher and voluntarily accepted to participate in the research.

Research data was collected through the semi-structured interview form and analyzed by means of content analysis technique, which is one of the qualitative data analysis technique. The researcher has tested the clarity of the questions by conducting a pilot application with an objective to ensure their liability to be used for the research. The consistency of the interviews has been checked by assessing the data at different times and reliability of the research has been ensured by taking the expert option about the categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Diversity Leadership

The teachers are requested to define diversity leadership in the negotiations performed with them, and it was seen that they generally produced definitions matching up with the ones in literature. These opinions are grouped and described below.

Diversity Leadership has an Integrating Characteristic

The teachers emphasized the ability to keep together the individuals with different environmental and personal characteristics, while defining diversity leadership. Some of the opinions of teachers regarding this issue are as follows:

Ahmet: *Leadership that can create a meaningful whole by bringing persons and elements together functionally, who have various characteristics in line with common purposes.*

Hasan: *The person who aims to bring together the people in different ethnic groups and accepts them with all of their differences.*

Aydin: *The ability to hold together individuals in harmony who have different personality characteristics, different language, religion, and race.*

When diversity leadership is considered in terms of integrative characteristics, it is defined as the ability to hold together the individuals

with traits such as different language, religion, race and political opinion in line with common objectives, and create a meaningful whole from them and keep them together. According to Crosby and Bryson (2010) for collaboration to work, there needs to be an integrative leaders, someone who is able to bring diverse groups and organizations together in semi-permanent ways (Quoted by de Lancer Julnes 2015).

Diversity Leadership Requires Accepting the Differences

Following the negotiations, it was observed that some of the participants considered diversity leadership as acknowledging the differences held by individuals. Some of the statements regarding this standpoint are as follows.

Mahir: They are the leaders who accept that people in any society, culture are impossible to be uniform, such that, the perspectives of even the same person may differ.

Yasemin: The ability to accept a person as he/she is, despite all variable traits of that person, and manage to respect them.

Yusuf: The leader who accepts people as they are and not try to change them.

Rather than trying to make similar the people from different cultures, a leader should create a coherent team, by making use of the reality that everybody is different. That is, he should accept and utilize the capabilities of his subordinates in order to create team spirit (Gursoy 2005). Specifically, people have the need to belong, by identifying and defining themselves as members of a group while, at the same time, seeing themselves as different and asserting their uniqueness. When organizations have positive diversity climates, employees feel a strong sense of group acceptance: they are treated and respected as an insider while, simultaneously, being allowed or encouraged to retain their individuality (Oberfield 2015).

Diversity Leadership Requires Respecting the Differences

In the negotiations performed with the teachers, it was observed that the teachers are of the opinion that diversity leader should respect the differences as well as accept such differences. Some of the statements regarding this issue are presented below.

Ozlem: It refers to the leader who is open to any idea, respects any opinion and displays democratic attitudes.

Ayse: The type of leader that is aware of personal differences, and who respects this and makes use of such in a beneficial way when required.

Pinar: It requires respecting ethnic origin and thinking styles of people, treating them equally and utilizing such differences.

The concept of diversity includes acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies (Hima Bindu 2015). When the definitions are evaluated, it can be said that the teachers are of the opinion that diversity leaders should utilize differences as well as respect the differences and opinions held.

Diversity Leadership Requires the Ability to Manage Differences

Management of diversity emphasizes the requirement to consider the differences within organizational policies thereby accepting such cultural differences between the groups of employees. To promote an organizational structure that varies culturally and respects diversity ensures the increase in creativity and efficiency of employees thereby using all potentials of employees in their works (Wrench 2005). Some of the teachers emphasize the ability to manage diversity while defining diversity leadership. Some of the opinions of teachers regarding such skill are as follows:

Sinan: It is the ability of a person, who performs management (leadership) in a society in which people with different gender, religion, ethnic origin and political opinions are involved, to carry out works without any problem and manage to do so despite such diversity.

Mehmet: A leader is the one managing the people with different characteristics, who are under his own administration.

Emrah: It can be defined as the type of leadership that can use dominant characteristics of any employees in a heterogenic work environment in terms of work efficiency and displaying a smooth management.

The knowledge of different cultures and the skill to manage diversity among cultures would help the executive in dealing with the leadership issues (Godiwalla and Bronson 2015). According to Northouse (2001), an efficient leader should be skillful in terms of managing diversity and evaluating different backgrounds and feelings of subordinates. Teachers' statements in this respect have similarity with the opinions of Northouse (2001).

Diversity Leadership Requires Being Impartial and Ensuring Equality and Justice

Objectivity refers to preferring no one to the other, being away from prejudices and stereotypes. Prejudices may result in a biased assessment and favoritism. In this case, senses of justice of followers may be distrusted and confidence in leader may decrease (Glanz 2002). In this context, the teachers have emphasized concepts such as justice and equality while defining diversity leadership. Some of these definitions are presented below:

Eda: *The type of leadership which is performed by acting fairly towards the individuals of the society led by him; accepting any individuals unconditionally with their differences without considering the factors such as religion, gender and ethnicity.*

Birkan: *The type of leader who can treat employees equally, despite all their differences, and manage such process fairly.*

If the diversity is desired to be used for the sake of the organization, it is essential that a leader should have an impartial and unbiased attitude towards any of the followers. When the followers feel that they are not treated fairly, they will be angry and have negative feelings (Hopkins and Hopkins 1998). That leader does not discriminate due to differences such as race, gender, language, religion and political view is important in terms of creating a common organizational culture and a favorable environment, thereby preventing the formation of internal and external groups within the organization. Otherwise, for sub-cultures to emerge within the organization and likely decisions among them may hinder the organization to reach its objectives.

Diversity Leadership Requires Being Tolerant and Sensitive to Differences

While defining diversity leadership, some of the teachers stated that a leader should be sen-

sitive to, and tolerant of differences. Some of the definitions regarding this topic are as follows:

Ibrahim: *They are the leaders who are sensitive to any kind of differences of followers and who can manage such differences in compliance with the objectives of the group.*

Omer: *The leader, who is tolerant of differences.*

To be tolerant of differences also leads the drive for being tolerant of new ideas. Being patient may contribute to an increase in life quality and experience of employees. When people feel that they are accepted into a community and they belong to such community, they do not want to leave the community and create a common identity (Grant 2012). As for sensitivity within the scope of diversity, it refers to the fact that the leader is aware of the attitudes and feelings of followers who have differences. Leadership behavior without sensitivity tends to exclude diversity (Hopkins and Hopkins 1998).

Characteristics of a Diversity Leader

In the second part of the study, teachers are asked about the characteristics that an efficient diversity leader should have. With regard to the data obtained from the negotiations, the answers are rated. As a result of such ratings, characteristics required to be held by an efficient diversity leader are collected under two themes (titles), namely, characteristics specific to a diversity leader and general leadership characteristics. Data regarding these characteristics is indicated in Table 1.

a) Characteristics Specific to Diversity Leader

When Table 1 is considered, it is seen that equality and non-discrimination characteristics are among the main behaviors expected from an efficient diversity leader. These characteristics are respectively followed by justice, respecting diversity, being integrative, making use of diversity, being aware of, and accepting diversity, sensitiveness, objectivity, empathy, tolerance, mediation and keeping values.

Teachers gave priority to justice while defining the behaviors expected from a diversity leader. Within this concept, they emphasized the following behaviors such as treating everyone equally, being fair in awards and punishments, non-discrimination against union, gender, polit-

Table 1: Rating table for the characteristics of an efficient diversity leader

	<i>Characteristics specific to diversity leader</i>	<i>General leadership features</i>
Ahmet	Empathy, Integration, Mediation	Idealist, Sympathetic
Elif	Non-Discrimination, Justice	Charisma, Realism
Ibrahim	Tolerance, Sensitivity, Awareness, Utilization of Differences	Charisma, Organizing Ability, Diligence, Patience
Osman	Respecting Differences, Keeping Values	Listening, Problem Solving
Hasan	Accepting Differences, Integration, Mediation, Sensitivity	Consistency, Objectivity
Eda	Non-Discrimination, Equity, Tolerance	Benevolence, Guidance
Birkan	Equity, Justice, Utilization of Differences	Farsightedness
Ipek	Non-Discrimination, Justice, Equity, Integration, Mediation, Accepting Differences	Solution-Oriented, Efficient Communication
Aydin	Respecting differences, Accepting Differences, Utilization of Differences	Solution-Oriented, Efficient Communication, Entrepreneurship, Experienced, Logical
Nilgun	Justice, Equity, Accepting Differences, Sensitivity	Sincerity, Consistency
Emrah	Equity, Impartiality	Rationalism, Realism, Farsightedness
Sinan	Tolerance, Respecting Differences, Equity, Justice	Organizing Ability, Farsightedness, Organizing Ability, Problem Solving
Mahir	Awareness, Sensitivity, Empathy	Debonairness, Listening, Oratory Ability,
Yasemin	Non-Discrimination, Impartiality, Keeping Values, Utilization of Differences,	Encouraging, Exemplary, Success-Oriented, Listenins
Hatice	Integration, Accepting Differences, Sensitivity	Innovativeness, Constructiveness
Ozlem	Equity, Non-Discrimination,	Realism, Concern,
Emine	Non-Discrimination, Impartiality	Guidance, Exemplary
Ulku	Respecting differences, Integration	Concern, Knowledgeable, Sincerity
Emre	Non-Discrimination, Utilization of Differences, Awareness	Conflict Management, Discipline, Determination
Ayse	Equity, Respecting Differences,	Optimism
Mehmet	Empathy, Tolerance, Justice	Innovativeness, Knowledgeable,
Sevgi	Justice, Impartiality, Respecting Differences	Utilization of Opportunities, Innovativeness
Omer	Non-Discrimination, Integration	Listening
Yusuf	Awareness, Utilization of Differences,	Conflict Management, Guidance
Pinar	Respecting Differences, Impartiality, Awareness, Empathy	Diligence, Farsightedness, Honesty

ical view, hometown, and being impartial. Some of the opinions in which justice concept is emphasized are as follows:

Elif: A diversity leader does not take stock of people based on union or political view, he behaves fairly within the scope of regulations, and he is gender-neutral and distributes awards fairly.

Yasemin: A diversity leader is a leader who is indiscriminate, impartial, success-oriented, a model and who does not evaluate a person with anything other than his performance, create disturbance; who listens, promotes, attaches importance to human values and utilizes our differences.

Emine: A diversity leader should be impartial in particular. He shouldn't discriminate in favor of relatives, hometown and gender. He should set us an example and direct us.

That the leader does not discriminate due to differences such as race, gender, language, religion and political view is important in that this will create a common organizational culture and a favorable environment thereby preventing the formation of internal and external groups within the organization. Otherwise, for sub-cultures to emerge within the organization and likely decisions among them may hinder the organization to reach its objectives.

Another substantial attitude expected from a diversity leader is the skill to manage diversity. In this context, teachers expect the leaders to be aware of differences, accept and respect differences unconditionally, and make use of such differences. Some of the opinions of teachers regarding this issue are as follows:

Emre: *Diversity leader respects different characteristics, political views, worldviews and cultural richness of their employees, and makes use of such differences in favor of the organization by improving them.*

Yusuf: *The person who can see different traits of people, make such differences beneficial to the corporate, that can ensure synergy with the other people in the organization and those who can minimize clash environment are diversity leaders.*

Hasan: *A diversity leader should unconditionally accept personal differences, and act sensitively against such differences. He should integrate people with different characteristics and carry out mediation regarding the arising problems. He should also be consistent and impartial.*

Management of diversity is based on acknowledgement of personal differences as they are, like non-discrimination against anyone or group within the organizations and utilization of differences in accordance with individual and organizational purposes (Memduhoglu, 2008). Accordingly, a leader is required to make use of differences in line with the purposes of the organization, that is, manage diversity, considering the fact that each individual is different from the other.

In the negotiations performed with the teachers, it was emphasized that an efficient diversity leader should treat people with tolerance, empathize with other people by trying to understand their feelings and opinions and protect humanitarian values by adopting such values. Some of the statements regarding these particulars are presented below:

Mehmet: *An efficient diversity leader should first and foremost attach importance to the feelings and considerations of others. He should be patient and fair.*

Osman: *An efficient leader should have respect for different traits of others, he should not try to change them and protect their values. The leader should listen to the problems of subordinates and try to solve their problems.*

Empathy is a very crucial attribute to be held by the leader to direct his followers to the target. Success could be achieved when the leader finds the lowest common denominator for the targets of both the individuals and the group by recognizing firstly himself and all individuals within the group. To this end, the leader should prima-

rily learn the attributes and needs of each member of the group, he should be able to understand them and make use of such information in scheduling and implementation of the works to be performed. The leader with such a perspective builds trust and ensures formation of cooperation among group members (Kirmaz 2010). Furthermore, good leaders treat individual differences permissively and feel the threat of such diversity less, because they know that people are unwilling to leave their identities within the organization (Memduhoglu 2008).

Another substantial feature to be held by a diversity leader according to the opinions of teachers is that he should carry out an efficient reconciliation in case of conflicts and play an integrative role within the group. Some of the statements following the issue are as follows:

Ipek: *A diversity leader is the one that can carry out reconciliation among people during the problems that may occur, and generate alternative solutions, and that can gather the people around in a whole. Therefore, he should primarily be experienced, reasonable, fair and equal. He should not remain passive against the problems and he should be outgoing.*

Hatice: *A leader should be innovative and actuator. He should accept different aspects of people and be sensitive to these. In this way he can keep his subordinates as a whole, he can mutually act with them.*

Omer: *A diversity leader should not discriminate. He should listen to the problems of everybody and undertake an integrative role.*

An integrative leader is the one who collects information, decides, organizes groups, and gathers different social shareholders within a consistent whole. This leader also contributes to the formation of a deep, rationalist community equipped with knowledge (Gurer 2014).

Mediating role of the leader generally appears in cases of conflicts. This is why the leader should primarily have management skills to solve his own inner conflicts or bilateral conflicts encountered with his own side and his subordinates (Dagli and Sigri 2014). The leader should try to avoid individual or in-group likely conflicts in order to fulfill the objectives of the organization by standing in between different cultures. In this respect, the leader should frequently inform the employees about the importance of differences found within the organization in terms of global competition. Thus, the different groups and in-

dividuals within the organization focus on how to use their capabilities and conflicts within the organization are minimized (Hopkins and Hopkins 1998).

b) General Leadership Features

Teachers also emphasized the common attitudes anticipated almost in any leadership types while defining the behaviors they expect from diversity leaders in the negotiations performed with them. Such attitudes are discussed under three groups, being personality characteristics of the leader, communication skills and management skills.

It was revealed in the studies that the relations between personality traits and leadership are positive and negative directional (Caglar et al. 2005; Korkmaz 2006). Furthermore, Spangler, et al. (2004) and Hogan and Judge (2012) remarked that some of the personality traits decrease the efficiency of a leader while some others increase it. In this respect, it can be said that an efficient leader should bear personality traits, which are approved by his/her followers.

Pinar: In my opinion, an efficient leader should be hardworking, honest, impartial and farsighted. He should try to understand us, respect us even though we are not like him and see our good sides.

Ulku: A diversity leader should be concerned, knowledgeable, decisive and disciplined. He should respect differences of anybody, and try to gather everyone under the same roof despite such differences.

Aydin: An efficient diversity leader should accept and respect our differences and try to make use of this diversity. He should carry out these in amiable feelings and with consistent behaviors.

Now, when all of these teachers' expressions some of which are exemplified above are considered, the personality traits expected from diversity leader are determined to be *charisma, diligence, discipline, honesty, realism, debonairness, optimism, patience and benevolence.*

One of the crucial characteristics a leader should have in order to be able to influence his followers is communication skills (Crosbie 2005; Barrett 2006; Mumford et al. 2007). A leader is not able to carry out all of the works performed in an organization, and he cannot undertake all of the roles. Therefore, the leader can share the

responsibilities of the organization with the individuals within such organization. At this point, a leader's communication skills come into play (Yoruk and Kocabas 2000). Some of the statements emphasizing the communication skills of the leader are specified below:

Mahir: A good leader should listen to his subordinates, place importance on their ideas. He should have eloquence and he should be understandable by telling something as it is. The leader should also be smiling I think, because we should not hesitate to go and tell our problem...

Ulku: We are all human beings and have very different traits. This is why a leader should primarily respect us, so that he can get respect from us. Apart from this, he should clearly state his thoughts and feelings, that is, he should not speak differently to me and differently to others. I think that he should attend to his subordinates and of course be knowledgeable in his field.

Teachers expect that leaders should have communication skills just as they should keep their communication channels open, evaluate ideas and problems by listening, be clear and understandable and express their feelings and thoughts in an amicable way. Communications skills expected from a leader based on the answers received from teachers are determined as *listening, efficient communication, oratory ability, sincerity, constructiveness, warm-heartedness and concern.*

In the negotiations performed with teachers, it was observed that they perceived the school directors as leaders. As a matter of fact, it is quite natural to perceive the case like this in educational organizations, because their first addressee regarding any kind of operations and procedures, the problems encountered and their solutions is the headmaster. In this regard, it was determined that teachers also emphasized management skills while defining the characteristics of diversity leader. Some of the opinions about the issue are as follows:

Sinan: ...The leader should share tasks according to capabilities and interests of people in the school; see the likely problems in advance and take measures thereof. Besides, he should produce proper solutions for the encountered problems objectively.

Sevgi: An efficient leader should be open to new ideas and have a supportive attitude to-

ward such ideas. He should utilize the opportunities and know how to get efficiency from people...

In accordance with the expressions of teachers' characteristics, a leader should have under management skills. The answers received from teachers in this category are determined to be as *problem solving skill, organizing ability, being solution-oriented, success-oriented; conflict management, farsightedness, utilization of opportunities, idealism, innovativeness, determination, guidance, exemplary, being reasonable and impartial, entrepreneurship; treating consistently, being knowledgeable and experienced.*

CONCLUSION

This study is primarily aimed at producing the definition of diversity leadership based on the opinions of teachers. When the definitions of teachers regarding diversity leadership were evaluated, it was seen that they generally produced definitions similar to those in literature. In the schools involving many differences such as gender, ethnic origin, political opinion and the union, it was determined that teachers have expectations of respect to their differences, acceptance of such differences and utilization of these differences. They emphasized that leaders should be fair and impartial while performing these and they stated that the leader could in this way unify the community, he/she is addressing to.

When the definitions of teachers were evaluated in general, Diversity Leadership could be defined as "a process of acting respectfully, sensitively, and tolerably against the diversity of individuals with many differences such as gender, language, religion, race, ethnic origin, personality and political view by accepting them as they are, making use of such diversity of individuals in line with the objectives of the organization and directing such people in line with common objectives by holding them together in harmony, thanks to an impartial and fair management mentality."

In the second part of the study, the following question is discussed, that is, "what should the characteristics of an efficient diversity leader be?" The answers provided at this point by the teachers show parallelism with their definitions of diversity leadership. The characteristics, which should be held by a diversity leader, are gathered under two fundamental titles. The first of

these is about the particulars peculiar to diversity leader and the second is about the characteristics, which are common almost in all leadership types.

Based on the answers provided by the teachers, characteristics peculiar to an efficient diversity leader were determined to be *justice* (equality, objectivity, non-discrimination), *ability to manage diversity* (respecting differences, accepting differences, awareness and utilization of differences), *integration, mediation, empathy, tolerance and keeping values.*

Behaviors such as farsightedness, efficient communication, problem solving skills, which are considered common almost for all leadership types, are also expected from an efficient diversity leader. Attitudes specified as a result of the negotiations performed with teachers were classified in the light of expert opinions, under three categories as personality traits of the leader, communication skills and management skills. Personality traits were determined to be *charisma, diligence, discipline, honesty, realism, debonairness, optimism, patience and benevolence.* The attitudes such as *listening, efficient communication, oratory ability, sincerity, constructiveness, warm-heartedness and concern* are involved within the scope of communication skills. Finally, management skills expected from leaders are listed as *problem solving skill, organizing ability, being solution-oriented, success-oriented; conflict management, farsightedness, utilization of opportunities, idealism, innovativeness, determination, guidance, exemplary, being reasonable and impartial, entrepreneurship; treating consistently, being knowledgeable and experienced.* Coding the characteristics of a diversity leader with the letters of the word, "simpatico", which means kind, sympathetic in Spanish, Hopkins and Hopkins (1998) defined such characteristics as, a) Sensitive, b) Impartial, c) Mediator d) Patient, e) Amiable, f) Teacher, g) Involved, h) Communicator and i) Optimistic. At this point, the attitudes, teachers expect from diversity leaders show great similarity with the characteristics of diversity leader.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each individual within the organization has many different particulars such as sociocultural variables, personality traits, knowledge and ex-

perience. Such differences may result in formation of sub-cultures within the organization. If such sub-cultures fail to work in conformity with each other and approach differences of each other with tolerance, it is inevitable that there occur conflicts within the organization. An efficient diversity leadership will help solve such conflicts through win-win principle. Because diversity leader helps his followers be aware of these issues as well as having characteristics such as sensitivity, tolerance, objectivity and mediation.

Priority of a diversity leader is to create a diversity friendly environment. For this purpose, considering the organizational climate and culture in terms of diversity, a leader should try to create awareness of employees thanks to several systematic trainings and activities about the fact that diversity enriches both the individuals and organizations, and he should endeavor to make a culture and climate change within the organization for valuing diversity. In order to minimize the attitude to resist the change likely to occur within the organization, a leader should not overlook any diversity, and he should try to create this awareness in all workers and show an optimistic approach against the problems to be encountered without losing his faith.

A diversity leader may turn differences into an advantage in terms of both the organization and the employees by establishing a positive interaction with his members, since performing an efficient leadership towards diversity increases motivation of employees and their involvement in the organization, their work and life satisfaction, while such also brings benefits to the organization such as recent perspectives, creative ideas and a positive organizational image.

NOTE

*This paper was presented at the 1st International Conference on Lifelong Education and Leadership, in Olomouc, Czech on October 29-31, 2015.

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