

Relations between Trust in Principal and Shared Leadership*

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KEYWORDS Correlations. Leadership Dimensions. Trust Principal. Teachers' Perceptions, Schools

ABSTRACT The purpose of this study is to discover and describe the perceptions of teachers about their level of trust in principals and shared leadership skills in schools. The study group was 1,174 teachers from randomly selected schools in Istanbul, Kocaeli and Sakarya. The research was conducted on relational survey method. Data analyzed in a packet program for social sciences. The research indicated that trust in principal was positively and significantly related to shared leadership and its sub-dimensions. The correlation analysis predicted that there was a medium level of positive correlation between trust in principal and shared leadership perceptions of the teachers. Moreover, emotional support and joint completion of task dimension of shared leadership are predictors of trust in principals in Turkish schools therefore, the researcher can claim that trust in principals is the core of organizational trust level and increasing shared leadership behavior as well.

INTRODUCTION

Shared leadership has emerged as a new perspective on leadership and received greater attention from researchers in the field of management and education since the beginning of the 21st century. The trust is having more interest nowadays in organization culture and Robinson and Rousseau (1994) stated that trust is always related to social sciences and it is a key factor motivating the employee in an organization (Aslan and Özata 2009) to develop an effective leadership in the organizations (Conger and Kanungo 1987).

Because of the positive impact of organizational trust within school settings, researchers focus on the relation between shared leadership and organizational trust. Shared leadership skills build the transparency by creating openness. Organizational culture characterized by transparency and openness may enhance trust level and form higher efficiency in use of resources.

Organizational Trust

Trust is willingness to take risk (Johnson-George and Swap 1982) and to be vulnerable (Mayer et al. 1995; Rousseau et al. 1998), belief of a congruence of values (Lewicki and Bunker 1995) and eagerness to rely on others (Doney et al. 1998; Rousseau et al. 1998). Over the last several decades, researchers from different ages and academic disciplines have agreed that trust is exceedingly fruitful for the functioning of the

organizations. Trust in organizations has two dimensions: personal and organizational. These levels are combining and developing trust in organizations in the society (Nyhan and Marlowe 1997; Blomqvist et al. 2003). Vision of high level administrators and beliefs to them creating trust to administer (Grean and Uhl-Bien 1995; Wang and Clegg 2002).

Kee and Knox (1970), Zand (1972), Mayer et al. (1995), Sheppard and Sherman (1998) and Williams (2001) made a risk-based definition for trust, while Mayer et al. (1995), Currall and Judge (1995), McKnight et al. (1998), and Gillespie and Mann (2004) stated that trust refers to beliefs about others. Moreover, McAllister (1995), Rousseau et al. (1998), Dirks and Ferrin (2002) and Gillespie and Mann (2004) conceptualized trust within a cognitive and an affective context as an inner process, while Mayer et al. (1995), Serva et al. (2005) and McKnight et al. (1998) stressed trust as interpersonal and group's intentions and behaviors to others in relations.

After trust was seen as a group behavior, it was also started to be examined in organizations. For instance, the study conducted by Aslan and Özata (2009) shows that the participation and the interaction level was high at the same time when the trust level was high in an organization. Also, Folger and Konovsky (1989) studied with the workers in a production company and they found that when the workers trusted in their leaders, they participated in willingly and showed high performance in their work. Moreover,

Vineburgh (2010) focused on organizational trust and associated variables (empowerment, resistance to change, support for innovation, interpersonal conflict, and demographics) as perceived by faculty in the work environment of colleges and universities. The database included responses of faculty to structured items included in survey measures. Analyses of the study revealed that higher levels of empowerment, higher levels of support for innovation, and lower levels of interpersonal conflict were associated with higher levels of organizational trust.

Shared Leadership

Researchers have argued that leadership is not the monopoly or responsibility of just one person, rather there is a need for collective and systematic understanding of leadership as a social process (Barker 2001; Hosking 1988). The common argumentation for emergence and necessity of shared leadership is that the leader cannot be the expert in teams including employees with different expert skills (Andreas and Lindström 2008). The shared leadership perspective focuses on relational processes and collaboration of co-construction as the bases of leadership (Mielonen 2011). Shared leadership provides a stronger leadership than relying on one top leader, (Pearce and Manz 2004) and it is the dispersion of leadership in the team members (Carson et al. 2007). Shared leadership is a group process through which leadership is disseminated among, and stems from, team members (Pearce and Sims 2000). Pearce and Conger (2003:1) explain the difference between shared leadership and traditional leadership as below;

The key distinction between shared leadership and traditional models of leadership is that the influence process involves more than just downward influence on subordinates by an appointed or elected leader [...]. Rather leadership is broadly distributed among a set of individuals instead of centralized in hands of a single individual who acts in the role of a superior.

It has been examined that shared leadership provides a range of benefits. Leaders can utilize their individual strengths, and organizations can benefit from diversity of thought in decision making (Evaggelia and Vitta 2012). Two or more leaders are better than one when “*the challeng-*

es a corporation faces are so complex that they require a set of skills too broad to be possessed by any one individual” (O’Toole et al. 2002:68). Shared leadership appears to be notably important in the development process and growth of new ventures in the organizations (Ensley et al. 2006: 228).

Looking through the previous studies conducted on shared leadership, it is clear that there are lots of arguments in the literature related to the issue. Yang and Shao (1996), Bradford and Cohen (1998), Denis et al. (2001); Pearce and Sims (2002), Sally (2002), Waldersee and Ealgeson (2002), O’Toole et al. (2003), Pearce and Conger (2003), Holmberg and Söderlind (2004), de Voogt (2005), Pearce (2004), Wilhelmson (2006) and Miles and Watkins (2007) studied on shared leadership and claimed that mutual leadership, co-leadership and meeting different interests on a common ground are the way for shared leadership. From their perspectives, communication between professions, handling environmental complexity, openness to change in managerial level, developing new strategies and basic values for organization are necessary for effective shared leadership.

Relations between Organizational Trust and Shared Leadership

The employees’ behaviors and relationships with their performance are affected by some variables in organizations (Cokluk and Yilmaz 2010). One of them is shared leadership of the employees in an organization since shared leadership is thought as the behavior affecting teachers as an employee in educational organizations especially in schools. The effects of shared leadership of school principals on teachers’ organizational trust perceptions can be seen as one of the most significant factors playing a critical role in the positive development of teachers’ organizational trust at school. Trusting school principals is one of the basic elements for productive group relations and the improvement of inter-personal relationships (Hoy et al. 1992). Thus, principals should have the necessary power to affect the teacher trust through constructing shared leadership behaviors in their schools (Bass and Yildirim 2010). Because trust is one of the basic needs in human relations Oksuzoglu (2012) supports that trust in administer is very significant for continuing activities in organization well organized.

Objectives

In the literature, the researcher found some studies about relations between organizational trust and leadership behavior such as Podsakoff et al. (1990,1996), Hoy and Sabo (1998), Pillai et al. (1999) and Arslantas and Pekdemir (2007). However, there is not enough study related to relationship between organizational trust level and shared leadership skills in schools in Turkey. The problem of the research is to conduct on the relationship between teachers' perceptions of organizational trust and shared leadership and the following sub-questions were answered: a) The level of organizational trust in schools b) the level of shared leadership skills (joint completion of tasks, mutual skill development, decentralized interaction, and emotional support) in schools? and c) the relationship between trust in school principal and shared leadership based on teacher's perceptions?

METHODOLOGY

In the study, survey method was conducted to determine the relationships between trust in principals and shared leadership skills of principals based on teacher's perceptions. For this purpose, the correlational survey method was used in this research.

Study Group and Instruments

The study group consisted of randomly selected 1,174 teachers who worked in different types of schools in Istanbul, Kocaeli and Sakarya cities in Turkey in the academic years of 2012-2013. The data was gathered with two scales; Trust in Principals is a part of Trust to Colleagues in School Scale was developed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) and adopted to Turkish by Polat (2007) and also Polat and Celep (2008) were used in the researches. In this research we used Trust in Principal sub scale. It consists of 15 items but 1 item was excluded because of low factor loaded. The researchers used 14 item scales and Total variance explained by organizational trust was 66 percent (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.94$). All factor loadings are upper than .45 and spreading from .70 to 85 . The answers of the scale; Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Mostly (4) and Always (5). Total scale scores showed the level of

participants' perceptions about trust in school principals. A high score from each factor showed a high feeling of trust, and a low score showed a low feeling of trust in principals. The scale included statements such as the following: "I believe in school principal's honesty", "Teacher-principal relationships in school are consistent", "School principal keeps his promises" (trust in principals).

Shared Leadership Perception Scale adapted by Bostanci (2012) with 18 items and 4 sub-dimensions: Joint Completion of Tasks, Mutual Skill Development, Decentralized Interaction, Emotional Support, Shared Leadership. Total variance explained by organizational Joint Completion of Tasks was 58.78 percent (Cronbach's α was 0.91); Mutual Skill Development was 84.40 percent (Cronbach's α was 0.81), Decentralized Interaction was 64 percent (Cronbach's α was 0.71), Emotional Support was 69.52 percent (Cronbach's α was 0.78) and Shared Leadership Total variance explained by expert power was 62 percent (Cronbach's α was 0.91). The scale which was designed to define school principals' shared leadership perception consisted of 18 Likert-type items and the answers consisted of; completely disagree (1), agree slightly (2), agree moderately (3), strongly agree (4), and completely agree (5). The scales were five Likert type instrument including never true (1), usually not true (2), usually true (3), always true (4).

Data Analysis

In the analysis, means and standard deviation, correlation analysis and variance analysis were conducted with statistical program and correlation analysis was used to describe the degree at $p < .01$ level. Descriptive statistics were used to explain the teachers' perceptions and multivariate regression analysis was used to determine whether school principals' shared leadership significantly predicted by teachers' trust in principal's perceptions. Correlation coefficients as absolute values ranging from 0.70 to 1.00 were considered high and accepted levels for high and significant correlations. Variance analyses were used to determine the significance level between the variables and to illustrate the source of difference through between and within group statistics. Variance analyses were tested at $p < .05$ level.

RESULTS

Among the participants, 48 percent (n=565) were female, and 52 percent (n=611) were male teachers. The teachers' ages are spreading from 22 to 56. Among the teachers, 28.9 percent (n=340) were in the ages of 20-29 years, 45.0 percent (n=529) were in the ages of 30-39 years, 19.7 percent (n=232) were in the ages of 40-49 years and 6.4 percent (n=75) were in the ages of 50 and above years. 29.2 percent (n=343) of the teachers were in the experience of one to five years, 21.9 percent (n=257) were in the experience of 6-10 years, 26.2 percent (n=308) were in the experience of 11-15 years, 12.0 percent (n=141) were in the experience of 16-20 years, and 10.8 percent (n=127) were in the experience of 21 years and above.

The Level of Trust in School Principals and Shared Leadership

The first and second research problem of the study is to find out the level of trust in principals and shared leadership level in schools. The findings related to the first question are explained in detail in Table 1.

Based on teachers' perceptions we can say that usually they trust in their principals ($\bar{X}=3, 46; S=0.41$). When the researcher looked at the second problem of the study, the investigations

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of shared leadership and trust (N=1174)

<i>Dimensions</i>	\bar{X}	<i>SS</i>
Joint completion of tasks	2.75	0.62
Mutual skill development	2.90	0.70
Decentralized interaction	3.33	0.54
Demotional support	3.00	0.60
Shared leadership	2.77	0.49
Trust to principal	3.46	0.141

further revealed that the level of shared leadership skills ($\bar{X}=2.76; S=0, 49$) level is moderate. When the researcher look at the dimension, orderly decentralized interaction was ($\bar{X}=3.00$), emotional support (=3.00), mutual skill development ($\bar{X}=2.90$) and joint completion of tasks ($\bar{X}=2.75$) respectively in schools.

The Relations between Trust in School Principal and Shared Leadership

When the researcher examines Table 2, it is seen that there are significant and positive correlation between shared leadership and trust and dimensions: joint completion of tasks ($p=.000; r=.60^{**}$), mutual skill development dimension ($p=.000; r=.45^{**}$), decentralized interaction ($p=.000; r=.23^{**}$), emotional support ($p=.000; r=.55^{**}$), trust ($p=.000; r=.60^{**}$), at .01 level. If the shared leadership perception increases the trust in school principal's level increases as well. Cor-

Table 2: Correlations between organizational trust and shared leadership perceptions of the teachers and school managers through its dimensions

<i>Dimensions</i>		<i>Joint compl of tasks</i>	<i>Mutual skill. development</i>	<i>Decentralized interaction</i>	<i>Emotional support</i>	<i>Leadership</i>	<i>Trust</i>
<i>Joint Completion of Tasks</i>	r	-					
	p						
	N						
<i>Mutual Skill Development</i>	r	.66**	-				
	p	.000					
	N	1170					
<i>Decentralized Interaction</i>	r	.17**	.12**	-			
	p	.000	.000				
	N	1157	1172				
<i>Emotional Support</i>	r	.62**	.62**	.17**	-		
	p	.000	.000	.000			
	N	1167	1182	1170			
<i>Leadership</i>	r	.93**	.77**		.76**	-	
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	N	1145	1145	1145	1145		
<i>Trust</i>	r	.60**	.45**	.23**	.55**	.60**	-
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	1127	1142	1130	1137	1103	

** Correlations are significant at .01 level

relations between total shared leadership and its dimensions are high and positive except decentralized interaction ($p=.000$; $r=-.007^{**}$).

Regression Analysis of Predictors of Trust to Principal's Perceptions

There is a moderate (close to high) positive correlation between the teachers' perceptions about trust in principals and school principals' shared leadership. All the power sources were significantly correlated with the teachers' trust in principals scores at a moderate level ($R = 0.64$, $p = 0.00$) (Table 3). School principals' shared leadership sources explained, 41 percent of total variance of the teachers' trust in principals perceptions. According to the standardized regression coefficient (b), the relative order of importance of shared leadership sources was as follows: joint completion of task, emotional support, decentralized interaction and mutual skill development. When t-test results of significance of regression coefficients were considered, only joint completion task and emotional support dimensions were predictors of trust in school principals. The other shared leadership sources were not significantly influential. According to the findings, regression equity of trust in principal perception was as follows:

$Trust\ in\ principal = 14.978 + 2.130\ Em.\ Support + 0.958\ J.C.Task + -.191\ De.\ Interaction + -.170\ M.\ Skill\ Development$

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study is to find out the level of shared leadership skills and trust in principal perceptions. But first, the teachers' perceptions about trust in principals and school principals' shared leadership level were exam-

ined. Then the relationships between these two concepts were examined in schools through teachers' perceptions. The research revealed that the teachers possess a high level of organizational trust and a medium level of shared leadership skills. The results are similar with other research findings (Ziegert 2005; Ozer et al. 2006; Çokluk-Bokeoglu and Yilmaz 2008; Yaron 2009; Yilmaz 2009; Altinkurt and Yilmaz 2012; Akin 2015; Ugurlu and Arslan 2015) because both of the variables of the research are necessary for the effective management of the schools. Moreover Altinkurt and Yilmaz (2012) claim that trust in organizations closely related to employees' perceptions. High level trust in principals might be the result of job guarantee in state schools. Furthermore according to Kagitcibasi (2006) the collective culture and social structure in Turkey can affect trust level of schools and trust in principals as well. Moreover, Drescher et al. (2014) propose that, the expansion of shared leadership within groups is related to growth in group trust. Their research findings contribute to the literature on shared leadership and group dynamics by demonstrating how the growth in shared leadership contributes to the emergence of trust and a positive performance trend over time. According to Hoy and Tarter (2004), teachers' trust perceptions are rather imposed by school principals. Moreover, teachers could have a tendency to generalize trust top principal to the organization. School principals are initiator of trust in schools. Teachers' confidence in school principals is one of the key factors to develop positive atmosphere in the schools and this positive atmosphere is also a dimension of organizational trust (Oksuzoglu 2012).

The correlation analysis revealed that the level of trust in principals and shared leadership skills of the teachers in schools are positively and significantly correlated with each other.

Table 3: Regression analysis results of prediction of teachers' organizational trust perceptions by school principals' shared leadership sources

Variable	B	SH	Beta	t-value	p	Paired r	Partial r
(Constant)	14.978	1.894	-	7.908	.000	-	-
Joint Comple. of Task	.958	.076	.426	12.673	.000	.360	.295
Mutual Skill Development	-.170	.302	-.019	-.563	.573	-.017	-.013
Emotional Support	2.130	.222	.309	9.598	.000	.281	.223
Decentralized Interaction	-.191	.137	-.033	-1.393	.164	-.042	-.032
R=.645(a) R 2=.416 F _(4,1072) = 192.23 p=.000							Dependent
Variable: Trust							

There is a positive and significant correlation between shared leadership skills and trust in principals. There are low and positive correlations among shared leadership skills and its sub-dimensions and trust in principals. This research results are correspondent with the previous findings such as Aslan and Özata (2009). They also found a positive correlation between leadership and organizational trust. Beforehand, Dirks and Ferrin (2001) tried to explore the positive impacts of different variables on organizational trust. The current study is significant because of its unique implication in Turkey. Differently, Hulpia et al.'s study (2011), examined the relation between organizational trust and distributed leadership perspective. Blomqvist and Stahle (2000) studied the role of trust and they developed a model on organizational trust building based on literature, personal experience and insight on the issue. Hulpia et al. (2011) examined the relationship between school leadership and teachers' organizational commitment by considering a distributed leadership perspective. Participants were included 1522 teachers from 46 large secondary schools in Flanders (Belgium). The results showed that 9 percent of the variance in teachers' organizational commitment was attributable to differences between schools. Teachers' organizational commitment was related to quality of the supportive leadership, cooperation within the leadership team, and participative decision-making.

Moreover schools effectiveness and teachers' commitment to school was related to quality of the supportive leadership, participative decision-making and cooperation within the leadership team. This result reinforces our findings positively well. We can claim that if trust in principals develops organizational trust levels are increased and leadership in organizations can be shared between school principals and teachers. Based on these research results, to develop the organizational trust and shared leadership skills, the following suggestions can be offered as well;

- Shared leadership trainings should be organized,
- Internal and external conferences related to organizational trust should be arranged,
- Teacher education programs at universities should include educational leadership and organizational trust subjects in their syllabus.

In order to generalize the results of the current research, similar studies in different parts of Turkey or in other countries are needed. As a result, these results could be compared to those of further research. In addition; future research should address the comparison of findings obtained from different settings.

CONCLUSION

Trust is one of the most important organizational behaviors in schools' culture. School principals play an important role in organizing a just and trustworthy and justice atmosphere in the schools. Therefore, teachers tend to increase the confidence of decision-making. The procedures should be applied equitably in all the processes and the distribution of the awards given to employees is to be justly carried out. Moreover, at schools, the most important factors that determine the confidence of the leader (principal) in schools are good attitudes and behaviors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings also stated that trust in principals is affected by referent shared leadership and its dimensions. Emotional support and joint completion task dimensions enable school principals to display behaviors based on personality traits. In other words, if teachers put their trust in their principals who display shared leadership behaviors more, the school atmosphere will be affected positively to increase effectiveness in schools.

NOTE

*This article was presented at EJER Congress 2014 in Istanbul.

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