

Managing Organizational Change: The Case of University-School Partnership

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Abstract

The study aims to examine in depth the perceptions of teachers and administrators about the organizational change process of a deep-rooted high school through a university collaboration in Turkey. We utilized an instrumental case study within the realm of qualitative research. We gathered the data via semi-structured interviews and used content analysis in the analysis. As a result of the analysis of the findings, four themes were reached which are change as perceptions, awareness, process, and effect on change. The views of participants revealed that there had been a change in factors that increase the effectiveness of the educational environment, such as school climate, student profile, parent/environmental involvement, and improvement of physical equipment. Based on some positive results, it was suggested that such cooperation practices should be disseminated, independent accreditation institutions should be consulted at the change stages to increase success, and initiatives should be taken to increase the competencies of key people who will make change effective.

Keywords: organizational change, change in schools, university-school partnership, instrumental case study



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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

Günümüzde değişim, hayatın her alanında olduğu gibi sosyal ve ekonomik sistemlerin tamamını etkilemekte (Güçlü ve Şehitoğlu, 2006; Waggoner, 2020), bu durum da örgütlerin değişime açık özellikler kazanmasını ve bunu sürdürülebilir kılmasını zorunlu kılmaktadır (Sayılı ve Tüfekçi, 2008). Örgüt, özünde değişim ihtiyacı görmese bile, nihayetinde hayatta kalmak uğruna çevresel değişim dinamiklerine tepkisiz kalamayacağından, üyelerinden en az dirençle değişimi kucaklayabilmesi başarı için kilit öneme sahiptir (Johns, 2013). Aslında değişim olgusu yeni bir kavram değildir; tarih boyunca örgütsel yaşamda var olmuştur. Ancak bu değişim olgusunu bu kadar farklı kılan küreselleşmedir. Küreselleşmenin etkisiyle değişim baş döndürücü bir hız kazanmıştır (Çolakoğlu, 2005; Skea, 2021). Küreselleşen dünyada rekabetin hızı göz önüne alındığında, kuruluşların klasik ve statik yapılarını korumaları artık mümkün değildir (Fullan, 2001). Bu nedenle kuruluşlar hem kendi iç yapılarından hem de dış çevrelerinden gelen değişim baskısına kulak vermeli ve değişime uyum sağlamalıdır. Nihayetinde değişim faaliyetleri ister başarılı ister başarısız olsun, her değişimin amacı örgütün yaşam şansını artırmaktır (Kondakçı vd., 2010).

Amaç

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, okul-üniversite iş birliğinde okul yöneticilerinin ve öğretmenlerin değişim sürecine ilişkin görüşlerini belirlemektir. Bu doğrultuda aşağıdaki sorulara yanıt aranmıştır: (1) Öğretmen ve yöneticilerin değişime yönelik bakış açıları nelerdir? (2) Okul yöneticileri ve öğretmenler değişimin okullarının gelişimine katkısını nasıl değerlendirmektedir?

Yöntem

Araştırma nitel araştırma deseninde durum çalışması modelinde tasarlanmıştır. İncelenen konuyu daha iyi anlamayı ve örneklendirmeyi amaçlayan (Stake, 1994'ten aktaran Creswell, 2012) araçsal vaka çalışması kullanılmıştır. Araştırmayı bu okulda gerçekleştirmemizin nedeni, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB) ile Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi (YTÜ) arasında Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim İşbirliği Protokolü imzalanmış olmasıdır. Protokol, teknolojik, öğretimsel ve akademik iş birliği yoluyla okulun bir zamanlar sahip olduğu akademik başarıyı yeniden kazanmasına yardımcı olmayı amaçlamaktadır. Amaçlı örneklem türlerinden ölçüt örnekleme ile belirlenmiş bir okul müdürü, dört müdür yardımcısı ve altı öğretmen olmak üzere toplam 14 katılımcı ile yüz yüze görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler yorumlanırken, nitel verilerin analizinde sıklıkla kullanılan bir veri yorumlama ve kodlama süreci olan içerik analizi uygulanmıştır (Bogdan ve Biklen, 2006). Çalışmada şeffaflığı sağlamak amacıyla, dökümler katılımcılara gönderilmiş ve analizden önce dökümleri teyit etmeleri istenmiştir. Daha sonra her bir araştırmacı görüşme dökümlerini birkaç kez okumuş ve ilk kodlar oluşturulmuştur. Daha sonra kodlar bazı alt temalar altında birleştirilmiş ve son olarak alt temalardan ana temalara ulaşılmıştır. Yorumlama sürecinde kodlar, kategoriler ve temalar belirlenirken deşifreler alan uzmanlarına gönderilmiştir.

Bulgular

Verilerin analizi sonucunda "algılar", "farkındalık", "süreç" ve "değişim üzerindeki etki" olmak üzere dört temaya ulaşılmıştır. Algılar teması altında iki alt temaya ulaşılmıştır: "değişime yönelik bakış açıları" ve "değişimin gerekliliği". "Değişime yönelik bakış açıları" alt teması altında

"farklılaşma", "reform", "yenilik" ve "planlı olma" alt kategorileri; "değişimin gerekliliği" alt teması altında ise "çağa ayak uydurma" ve "kaliteyi sağlama" alt kategorileri geliştirilmiştir. "Farkındalık" teması altında "kurumsal farkındalık" ve "mesleki farkındalık" alt temaları geliştirilmiştir. "Süreç" teması altında iki farklı alt tema oluşturulmuştur: "gözlemlenen değişimler" ve "hissedilen değişimler". "Değişim üzerindeki etki" teması altında "değişim ajanları" ve "değişime direnç" olmak üzere iki alt temaya ulaşılmıştır. Değişim ajanları alt teması altında "roller" ve "özellikler" alt kategorileri geliştirilmiştir.

Tartışma & Sonuç

Bulgular, katılımcıların okullarındaki bu değişim sürecinde yaşadıkları deneyimlere ışık tutmaktadır. Araştırmada elde edilen bulgulara göre, okul yöneticilerinin değişim sürecine ilişkin farkındalıkları ve hazır bulunuşlukları öğretmenlere göre daha yüksektir. Katılımcıların değişim sürecine ilişkin farklı görüş ve değerlendirmelere sahip olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Katılımcıların görüşleri, okul iklimi, öğrenci profili, veli/çevre katılımı ve fiziksel donanımın iyileştirilmesi gibi eğitim ortamının etkililiğini artıran faktörlerde değişim yaşandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bazı olumlu sonuçlara dayanarak, bu tür iş birliği uygulamalarının yaygınlaştırılması ve başarıyı artırmak için değişim aşamalarında bağımsız akreditasyon kurumlarına danışılması önerilmiştir.

Örgütsel Değişimi Yönetmek: Üniversite-Okul Ortaklığı

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Öz

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de köklü bir lisenin örgütsel değişim sürecine ilişkin öğretmen ve yöneticilerin algılarını üniversite işbirliğiyle derinlemesine incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma deseninde durum çalışması modelinde araçsal vaka çalışması kullanılmıştır. Veriler yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmış ve analizde içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. Bulguların analizi sonucunda algılar, farkındalık, süreç ve değişime etki olarak değişim olmak üzere dört temaya ulaşılmıştır. Katılımcıların görüşleri, okul iklimi, öğrenci profili, veli/çevre katılımı ve fiziksel donanımın iyileştirilmesi gibi eğitim ortamının etkililiğini artıran faktörlerde bir değişim olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bazı olumlu sonuçlara dayanarak, bu tür işbirliği uygulamalarının yaygınlaştırılması, başarıyı artırmak için değişim aşamalarında bağımsız akreditasyon kurumlarına danışılması ve değişimi etkili kılacak kilit kişilerin yetkinliklerinin artırılmasına yönelik girişimlerde bulunulması önerilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: örgütsel değişim, okullarda değişim, üniversite-okul ortaklığı, araçsal vaka çalışması



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Bu makale 28-30 Nisan 2023 tarihlerinde Ankara'da gerçekleştirilen 16. Uluslararası Eğitim Yönetimi Kongresi'nde özet sözel bildiri olarak sunulmuştur.

Managing Organizational Change: The Case of University-School Partnership

Today, the change affects all social and economic systems as it does in all areas of life (Güçlü & Şehitoğlu, 2006; Waggoner, 2020), and this situation necessitates organizations to gain changeable characteristics and make it sustainable (Saylı & Tüfekçi, 2008). Even if the organization does not see the need to change at its core, as it cannot ultimately remain unresponsive to the environmental change dynamics for the sake of survival, its ability to embrace change with the least resistance from its members is key for success (Johns, 2013). In fact, the phenomenon of change is not a new concept; it has existed in organizational life throughout history. However, what makes this phenomenon of change so different is globalization. With the effect of globalization, change has gained a dizzying speed (Çolakoğlu, 2005; Skea, 2021). Given the speed of competition in the globalizing world, it is no longer possible for organizations to maintain their classical and static structures (Fullan, 2001). Recognizing that no organization can impede the forces of change, the desire for change within organizational settings continues to intensify and gain momentum (Çelik & Gencer, 2019). For this reason, organizations should listen to the pressure for change both from their own internal structures and from their external environment and adapt to change. Ultimately, whether change activities are successful or unsuccessful, the goal of every change is to improve the organization's life chances (Kondakçı et al., 2010).

Trends Shaping Education 2022 by OECD, "explores the megatrends affecting the future of education, from early childhood through to lifelong learning" (OECD, 2022). In the face of a complex and rapidly changing world - economically, socially, technologically, and politically - the content and delivery of education must be reconsidered to meet the challenges. The nature of knowledge and learning is affected by this process of change, and it is critical for the future of education to keep up with the pace of change (OECD, 2022). *Four scenarios for the future of schooling*, also created by the OECD (2020), warns that traditional school systems break down and emphasize the importance of connecting the schools to the communities, supporting ever-changing forms of learning and social innovation.

When the literature is examined, there are studies on organizational change in education. There are many studies on distance education and organizational change, especially with the effect of the pandemic period (Carnegie et al., 2021; Maskály et al., 2021). In addition, there are also studies examining organizational change in higher education (Cardona et al., 2020; Dee & Leistyle, 2017; Ripkey, 2017), leadership types in the organizational change process (Gilley et al., 2009; Seo et al., 2012), the relationship between organizational culture and organizational change (Austin & Ciaassen, 2008; Latta, 2009), and the resistance of education staff to organizational change (Levent, 2016; Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013). On the other hand, there are few studies focusing on university-school collaboration for organizational development, and the research on this topic focuses more on the professional development of teachers (Bakioğlu & Sarıkaya Kirişçi, 2018; Yuan & Lee, 2015). Therefore, the examination of the organizational change process in the context of a school would be seminal for policymakers, researchers, educational leaders, and teachers. The main purpose of this study is to determine the views of school administrators and teachers on the change process during the school-university partnership. In this direction, answers to the following questions were sought: (1) What are the perspectives of teachers and administrators towards change? (2) How do the school

administrators and teachers evaluate the contribution of the change to the development of their schools?

Organizational Change

In the most general sense, change can be defined as “movement from one state to another” (Hargreaves, 2004, p. 287) the planned or unplanned differentiation that occurs in anything over a certain period of time. Erdoğan (2002) mentions that change can create positive results as well as negative results. To give a comprehensive definition, change can be defined as a differentiation from the previous behaviour or situation, which can occur in the form of progress or regression, and which does not carry any value judgment (Güçlü & Şehitoğlu, 2006; Helvacı, 2010; Özdemir, 2000). In this context, theories of change are structured in two basic frameworks: planned change and unplanned change theories. While planned change theories have a normative structure on how to manage and control change processes, unplanned change theories do not necessarily require a change to be controlled or directed. At this point, unplanned change theories have the presupposition that change is to some extent a self-initiated and self-sustaining force. On the other hand, the normative nature of planned change theories necessitates change as an improvement movement in the desired direction for organizations (Poole, 2004).

Kurt Lewin, one of the influential writers on the change process for organizations, states that the change process takes place in three stages. Accordingly, the basic change expressed as ‘unfreezing, changing and refreezing’ is analyzed in a fluid concept (Kanter et al, 2003). The first stage known as ‘unfreezing’ involves unfreezing the current state. This means defining the current situation and becoming aware of new knowledge, affairs, and habits. In the second stage of change, there is involvement in the acquired knowledge and the development of new habits. The third stage, refreezing, involves stabilizing the changes by setting policy and establishing new standards (Cameron & Green, 2012). Lewin's planned approach has been the focus of criticism for its reliance on seeing organizations as objects of stability acting under planned fixed conditions (Burnes, 2004). First of all, it is extremely difficult to talk about fixed and unchanging conditions for organizations whose main factor is people. Secondly, seeing organizations as rigid structures from a modernist perspective is becoming increasingly difficult in the face of today's existential challenges. For instance, the unexpected crisis environment created by the recent Covid-19 pandemic has once again proved the importance of ‘nimble organizations’ that can easily adapt to changing conditions (Skea, 2021) Similarly, Worley and Mohrman (2014), who classify change as the old and new normal, draw attention to the continuity and complexity of change in the face of the current pace of organizational life.

When it comes to organizational change, it is inevitable that some unforeseen and unpredictable situations will arise. In order to minimize this uncertainty, it is important to analyze the organization well and plan the steps of change well or to use the key elements of change to transform the organization (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013; Sayılı & Tüfekçi, 2008). When we consider Kotter's (2012) steps to make organizational change successful, creating a sense of urgency about the need for change in the organization, a strong coalition that will increase the success of change, and a vision are the pioneering steps. Subsequently, communicating this vision to the members of the organization and empowering them to act in accordance with the

vision, making short-term plans, and institutionalizing the improvements and changes achieved can be considered a good change plan (Kotter, 2012).

Mintzberg and Westley (1992) state that change can take place at a broader, conceptual level, such as the culture of an organization, or at a narrower and concrete level, such as an organizational member working on a job. An important issue that should not be ruled out is the possibility of encountering resistance to change (Burke, 2008) at whatever level it is implemented in an organization. For this reason, the power of influence of people who can deal with opposition and resistance to change and who can convince organizational members of the necessity of the change process with their political skills should be utilized (Waggoner, 2020). There is considerable evidence that change agents are critical resources in the organizational change process (Burns & Nielson, 2016; Li et al., 2022; Specht et al., 2018) influencing and accelerating communities to accept new goals that are different from the status quo.

Change in Schools

Just like other social institutions, change is a focus for schools, and it is crucial that they adapt to change in order to respond quickly to the ever-changing needs of society and the individual (Fullan, 2001; Levent, 2016). In addition, the physical improvement of schools and the upgrading of equipment are factors that increase the competitiveness and productivity of schools (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013). The targeted change in education must first be embraced by all education stakeholders (Erdoğan, 2002). What often happens in schools is that a change that is not embraced by teachers, parents, or students cannot be realized. On the other hand, resistance to change can occur in schools when school members are forced to implement new practices when they are not given the right to choose, or when they do not find change movements worth time and effort (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2013).

Greenman (1994 as cited in Özdemir, 2000) mentions that innovation movements in schools cover three stages. The first stage involves reviewing past practices and identifying deficiencies. The second stage is about reorganization. In the last stage, the third stage, the struggle between the old and the new is inevitable. At the end of the struggle, a return to the initial stage occurs with the evaluation of the resulting situation. Fullan (2001) states that any change in education should be considered in a much broader context, even if the change takes place only in a classroom environment.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are some common features among the basic dynamics and practices of school principals who direct any educational change. These include motivation to take steps, being in a learner position alongside teachers rather than in a dominant position, being consistent in improving education, having a strong social network to get support in solving problems, and a sense of moral commitment that all children can learn (Fullan, 2010). The degree of openness of school administrators to change is also an important factor and Wallace (2004) emphasizes that school leaders should not only be open to change but also have critical skills such as initiating, managing, and evaluating change. In addition, according to Holmes et al. (2013), the skills that leaders who are effective in the change process consistently demonstrate include creating a shared vision and setting direction for the organization, developing relational trust among stakeholders, having knowledge about solving complex problems, focusing on teaching and learning, establishing a participatory school structure, and being sensitive to external demands. For this reason, one of the critical skills

expected from school administrators, especially by the teachers in a school, is to understand and lead change willingly (Beycioğlu & Aslan, 2010).

Other important actors that will ensure the success of the change process are teachers. Teachers are expected to analyze the school-environment relationship well and implement complex practices effectively. Fullan (2001) states that any educational innovation movement depends on the teacher's way of thinking and behavior. If the teacher does not believe in the necessity of change or does not embrace it sufficiently, the change movement may not work. Therefore, if a successful change movement in education is aimed, it is extremely important to convey the goals of change to the actors of this change process in a concrete and clear way. In addition, the opinions of teachers should be taken during the whole stages of the change (Beycioğlu & Aslan, 2010).

Methodology

Context of the Study

Vocational high schools are considered important education institutions in terms of providing qualified intermediate staff demanded by the labor market and providing a competitive advantage to countries in the globalization conditions in terms of their contribution to the national economy (Özsoy, 2018). Although the vision of vocational and technical education institutions in Turkey reflects this perspective, unfortunately, they are not preferred by students with high academic achievement due to reasons, such as not being updated in accordance with the demands of the labor market, the employment problem of graduates, and the application of different coefficients in university entrance (Kaptan & Korumaz, 2022). Therefore, such schools are generally preferred by students who have not achieved high success in the university entrance exam and have low school scores. This situation creates a negative stereotype in the perspective of vocational education in Turkey.

The vocational high school where we conducted this study has historical and cultural significance. In addition to being the first vocational high school in Turkey to open departments such as Journalism, Electrical and Electronics, and Computer Science, it is also a well-established high school where the preparatory class (1 year of foreign language education, MoNE, 2005) practice in vocational high schools was tried. The school is located in one of the most popular districts of Istanbul. According to the statements of teachers and school administrators interviewed in the field, the school has a building that has historically been the center of attention for investors due to its central location, and that is sought to be transformed for profit. The school is known for its good relations with its alumni and their commitment to the school culture.

The reason we conducted the research at this school is that the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and Yıldız Technical University (YTU) signed a Vocational and Technical Education Cooperation Protocol. The protocol signed between MoNE and YTU covers only the Electrical and Electronics Department and the Information Technologies Department of the school for now (YTU Communication Coordinatorship, 2022). Within the scope of the project, which aims to train the human resources sought by the labor market in a fast and qualified manner, the main objectives can be listed as increasing the quality of all education services that will increase the success levels of students, developing education programs and improving teacher competencies through practical training activities. From this perspective, through

technological, instructional, and academic cooperation, the protocol aims to help the school regain the academic success it once enjoyed. The current rector of the university, who is also one of the authorized names in the protocol, is also a graduate of this school. The changes realized at the case school within the scope of the cooperation protocol can be listed as follows:

- The opening of the incubation center (54th Research and Development center of MoNE)
- The recruitment of students in the fields of Electrical-Electronics Technology and Information Technologies by exam
- A total of 5 years of education including preparation class
- Creation of preparatory class education programs under the guidance of the university's vocational school of foreign languages and professional cooperation (MoNE, 2022).

Participants

We determined the participants of the study using criterion sampling which is one of the purposeful sampling types. Patton (2002) states that criterion sampling allows all cases with certain predetermined criteria to contribute to an in-depth qualitative analysis. In criterion-based sampling, the next step after determining a set of qualities, factors, and characteristics by the researcher is to ensure that the determined criteria appear in the selected sample (Cohen et al., 2007). For school administrators, our criteria were that the participants had been involved in the protocol, and for teachers, that they had attended classes in order to be able to assess the situation of the school before and after the protocol. We conducted face-to-face interviews with a total of 14 participants, including one school principal, four assistant principals, and six teachers. Interviews were held in the deputy principal's office or in the teachers' room, and each interview lasted approximately 40 minutes.

Ethical Considerations

Before starting the study, we applied to the university Institutional Review Board (IRB) and obtained a permission for conducting this study (IRB number: 2022/12) which was issued on 27.12.2022. Prior to the interviews, each participant was informed about the context of the study and an appointment was made for the most convenient time slot. In addition, we used pseudonyms for the participants so that each participant could feel comfortable and provide candid feedback on the process. We used coding such as T1, T2, T3 etc. for teachers and A1, A2, A3 for school administrators.

Data Collection

We used the interview technique, which is used in qualitative research to access people's beliefs, feelings, and thoughts about facts and to comment on what the standards of actions might be, to examine behaviors, and provide explanations about their causes (Silverman, 1993, as cited in Cohen et al., 2017). We used the interview technique as we wanted to compare specific information obtained in other interviews and to understand the reasons (Dawson, 2002) and to do this, we developed a semi-structured interview form in three stages. In the first stage, we reviewed the literature on the general aims of the research and created draft questions for the interview. In the second stage, the interview questions were reviewed by an expert on the

field as a peer review strategy (Creswell, 2014). As a result of this review, some questions were eliminated, and additional questions were added.

The semi-structured face-to-face interviews were completed in December 2022. Each interview lasted approximately 40 minutes. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the interviews were audio-recorded after obtaining their permission. The audio recordings were transcribed and deleted in the evening of the same day. The transcribed recordings were sent to the participants for participant confirmation and each interview recording was confirmed by the participants.

Interpretation of Data

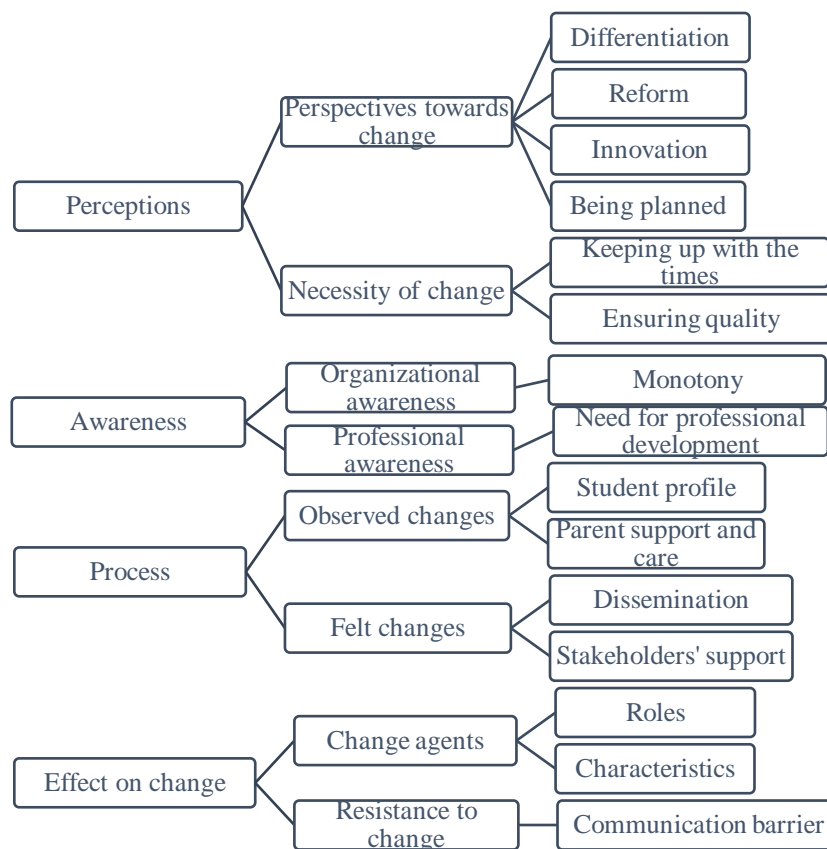
While interpreting the data, we applied content analysis which is a data interpretation and coding process frequently used in the analysis of qualitative data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Content analysis is a detailed and systematic interpretation of a body of data to identify patterns, biases, and meanings (Berg & Lune, 2012). People can reveal their unconscious beliefs, ideas, and attitudes in their communications; therefore content analysis is a useful way to examine human behaviour (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). As Saldana (2016) states, in content analysis, a code is a structure that reflects the essence of the data, which the researcher then creates for patterning, categorization, and other analytical processes in order to attribute meaning to each piece of data. Through this method, the transcripts were analyzed in depth, and codes, sub-themes, and themes were created. In order to ensure transparency in the study, the transcriptions were sent to the participants, and they were asked to confirm the transcriptions before the analysis. Then each researcher read the interview transcripts several times and initial codes were created. Then the codes were combined under some sub-themes and finally, the main themes were reached from the sub-themes. Transcriptions were also sent to experts in the field while determining codes, categories, and themes in the interpretation process. Finally, the researchers created four themes as follows: 'perceptions', 'awareness', 'process', and 'effect on change'.

Findings

As a result of the analysis of the data, four themes were obtained: "perceptions", "awareness", "process", and "effect on change". Under the theme of perceptions, two sub-themes were reached: "perspectives towards change" and "necessity of change". Under the sub-theme of "perspectives towards change", the sub-categories of "differentiation", "reform", "innovation" and "being planned" sub-categories were developed and under the sub-theme of "necessity of change", the sub-categories of "keeping up with the times" and "ensuring quality" sub-categories were developed. Under the theme of "awareness", the sub-themes of "organizational awareness" and "professional awareness" were developed. Under the theme of "process", two different sub-themes were created: "observed changes" and "felt changes". Under the theme of "effect on change", two sub-themes were achieved as "change agents" and "resistance to change". Under the sub-theme of change agents, the sub-categories of "roles" and "characteristics" were developed.

Figure 1

Themes, Sub-Themes and Categories



Theme One: Perceptions

When the concept of change was analyzed according to teachers' and school administrators' views, different sub-categories were found in terms of perspectives towards change and belief in the necessity of change. In the perspectives towards the change dimension, teachers and school administrators stated that change can occur in a positive, negative, prospective or planned manner, and provided different conceptual definitions. To give an example, the words of a teacher who defined change as going beyond the usual, routine, in other words, differentiation in a sense, were as follows:

We can say, "It is the formation of differences from the previous period". Can there be another definition? Change is a positive or negative differentiation from the previous period. Because change can be both positive and negative. (T4)

A1 stated that change created only a positive perception in her mind and emphasized the inevitability of change with the following words "*I think change is an indispensable element of life. Especially it is not usual for human beings to live a life without changing and developing. It is contrary to the ordinary flow of life*". On the other hand, a school administrator mentioned that any event must be planned and scientific in order to be called a 'change' with the following words "... it would not be correct to refer to every event as a change or a transformation. For it to be a change, it must be a planned process. It must be a scientific process" (A3). This shows

that school administrators have high awareness that the change process should be planned and programmed.

Another dimension of perceptions is the necessity of change. Under this sub-theme, teachers and school administrators emphasized the necessity of keeping up with the times in many aspects such as curriculum, education programs, methods, teaching technology, etc. For instance, A1 expressed his thoughts on this subject as follows: *"I can think of it as creating new things with a little new technology, learner-centred approaches"*. A4 is also among the school administrators who thought that there should be learner-centred, innovative methods and practices in education.

We put 30 children in a classroom, and we put a teacher in charge of them. They exchange information with each other. This model of education is an old model. So, this model needs to change... For instance, in History class, the teacher tells the story and the student listens to it, but it shouldn't be like that, the child should experience that history even a little bit.

The participants also underlined the necessity of change in order to ensure and increase the quality of education and training. T6 used the following expressions regarding the quality in education:

Today's students create tomorrow's society. For example, there are people who cannot do anything right, and people who do their job seriously, and who do it well, are getting lost in the shuffle. Therefore, we should aim for a process of change in favor of the students. You know; besides the academic dimension, they should also be supported in terms of behavior... I think change is necessary to ensure the quality of education. And this change will ultimately benefit society.

As it can be seen from the quotes, the perspectives of school staff on change have some similarities and differences. For example, while some participants emphasized that change should be planned, others mentioned that change can be both planned and unplanned. In addition to this, some participants frequently used the concepts of change and innovation interchangeably. Despite all different definitions, one thing that participants agreed on is the necessity of change.

Theme Two: Awareness

The findings exhibit that almost all the participants stated that they were aware of the need for innovation-oriented change in some organizational and professional issues in the school before the protocol was signed between their school and the university. A2 expressed her thoughts on this subject with the following words: *"We were, how should I put it, to use a vulgar expression, but we were living off our own hump... For example, an incubation center will be established in our school. I think this was a need before. As a matter of fact, we were talking about this from time to time"*. A4, a school administrator said the following words:

Towards the end of the 90s, the university door was closed for most of vocational high school students, and this is the reason why most quality students do not come here, because they cannot go to university. So, we were already aware that this thinking had to change.

Similarly, T2, a Turkish literature teacher, mentioned the student profile and mentioned that teachers do not update themselves on professional issues.

For me, I am happy with the change. Before, there was a situation like this: There was a group that was eliminated with the exam at school. Let's say the ones at the bottom of the sieve... Frankly, we have been having trouble for a long time. Does this make the teacher a bit passive or does the student not expect anything from you? Because the student comes with so little information that you try to give the little thing that you have. So, we were also aware of the need to update ourselves.

The participant views reflect that the need for change in the school was felt even before the protocol, but no action was taken. In particular, teachers stated that they did not take much initiative to update their professional knowledge as the academic level of the students was not so high. On the other hand, school administrators stated that they did not usually cooperate and collaborate with other education stakeholders before the cooperation protocol.

Theme Three: Process

The findings exhibit that almost all the participants stated that they observed substantial changes in many dimensions with the cooperation protocol. Within the scope of the protocol signed with the university, the participants stated that their schools have already experienced changes in many dimensions such as student profile, school climate, physical and equipment improvement, and parent/environmental participation. Moreover, according to the participants' observations, following the cooperation protocol, the school has taken some steps to create a professional community of practice and disseminate good practices in the coming years. In this context, the process theme consists of two sub-themes: observed changes and felt changes. Under the observed changes sub-theme, A5 who states that admitting students based on university exam scores has changed the image of the traditional vocational high school student, used the following words.

This year, for the first time, we are actually hearing the difference from our teachers who are entering the classroom. When the level of the student increases a little bit, the lessons become more satisfying. Since the level of the children is also higher for the teachers, we also have the chance to do different things academically. This has made a nice, positive contribution to us.

Similarly, T5 described the change in the student profile as follows: *"This year, students with fewer behavioral problems and who study harder have enrolled. You can feel it even when you walk down the corridor"*. In addition, A5 who is a teacher in the electrical and electronics department said: *"The fact that the name 'Yıldız Technical' is in the name of the school will be a reason for students to prefer this school and the student profile will get better and better"*. A school administrator who stated that the protocol gave them an advantage as a legal basis for purchasing additional books for preparatory classes, emphasized that another important change is the involvement of parents and the environment. Within this scope, A3 said the following words:

We can say good things about our new parent group... For example, when we hold a parent meeting, we witness full participation. Therefore, we can talk about a more interested and conscious parent group. In fact, a funny thing happened recently... We

dialled a wrong number to give information about a student's books and there was a situation where money should be paid for those books... The parent we called had already bought the books and paid for them. Afterwards, he said something like: if there is such a situation that the family cannot afford the books, let us sponsor them.

Another dimension in which change was observed was the expansion of the school's physical and hardware facilities. On this issue, T6 who is a teacher in radio and television branch, mentioned the advantages of the protocol with the following words *"...vocational training is done with tools and materials. In this sense, the Ministry and the University provided physical support for the establishment of an R&D center and tools were purchased."*

Theme Four: Effect on Change

Participant opinions about the people who are thought to have an impact on the change process in university-school cooperation differ in terms of being positive and negative. Therefore, under the theme of effect on change, two different sub-themes were achieved as "change agents" and "resistance to change". Under the sub-theme of change agents, the sub-categories of "roles" and "characteristics" were developed. Some participants stated that their roles in the change process had an accelerating effect on this process. A4 evaluated the roles of teachers during this process as follows: *"Our teachers took an active role at every stage, from budget preparation to attending meetings"*. A teacher T1 evaluated the school administration's role during this process as in the following words: *"I have been doing this job for 15 years and I have worked with many different school administrations. I have seen more royalists than the king, but believe me, the administration of our school is sincere, open to cooperation, and positive. We understood this better in this process"*. A2 who is one of the deputy school principals in charge of the protocol, evaluated her role during this process as follows:

I am 56 years old. However, I wish, as long as I have energy, strength and health, I should be able to transfer my experiences to my environment, my students and fellow teachers before I will retire... Frankly speaking, the new workload did not scare me, but I took extra care, attention and effort so that something would not go wrong because of me. I still try to make an effort and do it meticulously.

In addition to the roles, the participants also mentioned that people who pioneer the change and accelerate this process had some common characteristics. These characteristics are entrepreneurship, openness to teamwork, selflessness, dynamism, and farsightedness. According to A3 these people have some leader characteristics: *"These are people with more of a leader nature. In other words, people who ask what we can do better for the school and constantly look for various opportunities to do so"*. However, beyond all these characteristics, a frequently mentioned characteristic that change agents are considered to have by most participants is that they are loyal to the culture of the school. As mentioned before, the case school has a historically strong culture and is embraced by all stakeholders such as alumni, students, teachers, parents, etc. For instance, an English teacher T2 stated this:

The people who graduated from this school and are now in the management positions at Yıldız Technical University are loyal to the culture of the school... As far as I understand, this school was a very good high school in the past and it was a school that many people demanded and wanted to go to. They wanted to give this school's name back.

On the other hand, some participants stated that they were not given the right to express their opinions on any issue during the change process. A general assessment of this situation, they said, was that there were gaps in the flow of information, and they were not provided with enough information about the need for change. T4 criticized the decision makers as follows: *“They could have been a little more explanatory about what the process would bring, but I don't think they have much foresight in this regard... I think there is a lack of planning and especially some branches are excluded from the process”*. A5 *“Maybe there was an exciting entry and there were some retards in the rights we acquired under the cooperation protocol. So, there have been setbacks in planning”*. T5 summarized his ideas on this issue as follows: *“Things should have been more transparent across the school.”*

The quotations above show that teachers and school administrators have different views on the necessity and content of the change. However, they all emphasize the common view that some improvements have been experienced in their schools with the change process that took place within the scope of the protocol. On the other hand, there is a predominance of positive characterizations regarding the common characteristics and competencies of the people who are thought to influence and accelerate the change process.

Discussion, Conclusion, Recommendation

In this study, we aim to reveal the experiences and perceptions of teachers and school administrators about the change process that took place as a result of the partnership between a high school with a long-established history and a university. The findings shed light on the experiences of participants during this changing process in their school. According to the findings obtained in the research, school administrators' awareness and readiness for the change process is higher than that of teachers. The analysis above emphasizes that participants have different views and evaluations of the change process. Firstly, the fact that they define the phenomenon of change in different ways proves the conceptual confusion in the organizational change corpus based on the interchangeable use of concepts such as change, innovation, improvement, development, etc. The fact that there is a large number of research on change both in the business world and in the academic world is a phenomenon that increases this conceptual confusion today (Skea, 2021; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Definitions such as diversity, differentiation, innovation, etc. for the perspectives towards change bear traces of this confusion. However, participants think that change in education is extremely important for achieving quality, gaining competitive advantage, and keeping up with the times.

Secondly, the findings suggest that participants were already aware that change was necessary for their schools prior to the protocol. As it is known, external forces, such as the competitive environment due to labor markets, economic and technological changes, and internal forces such as organizational members, managerial changes, etc. force organizations to change (Lunenburg, 2010). The reflection of these factors on schools includes changes in education programs, teaching methodologies, physical and equipment improvements, etc. (Hargreaves, 2011). In this respect, it is a very positive factor that the participants agree on the necessity of a change on behalf of their schools. However, the fact that they did not take any initiative for school change before the cooperation with the university may be due to the fact that a strong coalition for change could not be established, a vision could not be created, or even if it was created, it could not be transferred to the members (Kotter, 2012). Iljins et al. (2015)

state that factors such as job satisfaction, team spirit, reward, consistency, consensus, and empowerment are the basic parameters of organizational culture in the change process. Thus, organizations should plan a change process by considering these factors on the axis of the main organizational culture. Therefore, another reason for the lack of previous effective change initiatives in the school may be the lack of planning for change in terms of organizational culture.

Thirdly, according to the statements of the participants, with the change process that started within the framework of the protocol, there have been tangible and observable changes in the school. These changes were mostly realized in criteria that are expected to be reflected in student academic achievement. Within the scope of the protocol signed with the university, the participants stated that their schools have already experienced changes in many dimensions such as student profile, school climate, physical and equipment improvement, and parent/environmental participation. Moreover, according to the participants' observations, following the cooperation protocol, the school has taken some steps to create a professional community of practice and disseminate good practices in the coming years.

Lastly, participant views prove that some people in the school pioneered the change and influenced others through synergies. Li et al. (2022) draw attention to the existence of change agents who have informal influence or power within the organization and can spread that influence to the other parts of the organization to create a community of people to accelerate change. These change agents, as Sonenshein (2016) put it, who act as a catalyst, have the power to prevent sparks from turning into flames against possible resistance and opposition in the organization. Under the theme of effect on change, participant views indicate that some people, especially those in administrative positions, play an active role in the change process, and that these people have a number of common characteristics such as entrepreneurship, taking action, openness to teamwork, dynamism, farsightedness, and having a social network, etc. While the findings support the literature on the importance of leader effectiveness in change management (Kotter, 2012; Seo et al., 2012), they also highlight the most critical skills of the leader. Like Gilley et al. (2009) state, it highlights how important a leader's communication and motivational skills are in the change process.

Last but not the least important finding is the tendency of some teachers to resist not being involved in the process and not having an effective communication network about the need for change. As Iljins et al. (2015) emphasize, employee satisfaction is important in the change process because dissatisfied employees who do not embrace change are much more likely to resist change. On the other hand, based on the research conducted by Çelik and Gencer (2019), it was deduced that teachers prioritize trust in their administrators above their colleagues, with students and parents ranking the lowest. The trust teachers have in their administrators can be seen as a factor that enhances their receptiveness to change. This is because when teachers have trust in their administrators, they are more likely to exhibit collaborative and innovative behaviors (Çelik & Gencer, 2019). Fullan (2001) argues that the success of change depends on how individuals handle this reality. Therefore, change can be realized by members embracing change. Similarly, the reflections of participants show that many participants were not sufficiently informed about the change process, were not informed about the developments, and were excluded from the team. The resistance of organizational members to change can be directed in the right way through change management. In order to achieve this, the active participation of members in the change process supports them to

embrace the change more. Consulting teachers' opinions about change and their influence on the decisions to be taken can alleviate and even eliminate their negative behaviors toward change. Within the framework of the results obtained in the study, the following recommendations can be taken into consideration:

- Since the partnership of schools with higher education institutions has positive effects, such cooperation practices should be disseminated in accordance with school types.

- Efforts should be made to enhance the capabilities of key individuals responsible for driving effective change and to encourage the whole team to embrace the change. To guarantee the sustained achievement of organizational change endeavors, it is vital to invest in comprehensive professional development initiatives. By providing teachers and administrators with the essential skills, knowledge, and support, we can cultivate an environment of ongoing learning and skill-building. This, in turn, enables schools to successfully navigate and flourish in the constantly evolving educational arena.

- Promoting a cooperative mindset among all parties involved is essential to achieve effective organizational change within schools. Sustained involvement and collaboration among teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the community will contribute to maintaining and magnifying the positive influence of change endeavors.

- To ensure well-informed decision-making and successful implementation of organizational change, it is crucial to adopt evidence-based approaches. By gathering and analyzing data, tracking progress, and regularly evaluating outcomes, schools can make informed decisions based on data, resulting in significant and enduring transformations.

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