

Perceptions of Teachers Educational Unions: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to determine the current situation of education unions qualitatively through the perceptions of teachers. The study is in a survey model and it has been carried out using qualitative research design. The study was carried out during the 2011-2012 education year on a total of 62 teachers, 30 of whom were the members of a union, 32 of whom were not, working for 20 primary schools in Kars province. As a data collection instrument a semi structural interview form was used in the study. Data analysis was done using content analysis technique, one of the qualitative data analysis techniques. According to the result of the study, teachers' perceptions of educational unions were not positive enough. Teachers complained about the huge number of unions, insufficiency the union authorities, and the relationship between union and politics.

Keywords: *Union, teacher organization, education union, reasons of becoming members to unions.*

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Extended Summary

Purpose

The main aim of this study is to found out the present positions and operations of unions operating in education-business in Turkey according to the member and non-member teachers' ideas.

It was tried to found out the answers of these sub questions to reach this main purpose.

According to memberized and nonmemberized teachers' point of views;

- g) What is the main function of education unions?
- h) What are the expectations of teachers about unions?
- i) How are the proficiency levels of the unions' authorized ones and unions?
- j) What are the reasons of preferring and not preferring the unions for teachers to be the members and not members of them? Who are the persons who are effective on the teachers preferences?
- k) What are the difficulties and uses of being members or not members of the unions for teachers?
- l) How is the contribution of the education unions to develop the qualification of education?

Method

This study was carried out by using semi structured interview technique in qualitative research method and designed in screening model. In the study, the teachers' paradigmas in education business, together with memberized and not memberized teachers' point of views qualitatively.

Participants

The study was carried out with totally 52 participants 20 of which were union members, 32 of which were not union members attendanted in primary schools in Kars in 2011-2012 academic years.

Data collecting instrument/tool and data analyzing

In this study semi structured interview form was used to collect data. The interviewing form called "*The teachers' Point of Views About Education Unions*" consisted of 7 personal information and 10 questions related to found out the ideas of teachers about the unions.

The data of this study were analyzed by using content analysis technique being one of the qualitative data analysing techniques. For that reason and first of all/at first the interviewing data were analyzed and the codes were defined on the resolved/analyzed text. After that, the codes created meaningful wholes were combined under themes. For the aim of creating codification and theme process' reliability, the data were studied on by two different researchers independently by coding and the consistency between the two researchers were examined

Result

At the end of the study the teachers who are the members of the unions claimed that the functions of unions were mostly defencing the training employees' rights, representing the members in a best way and supporting them materially and morally.

In the study it was understood that the main expectations of the memberized and non- memberized teachers were developing all teachers employee rights, but on the other hands the same teachers defined/emphasized that fulfilling these rights were the most difficult expectations. While the memberized teachers expressed that resolving the injustice between salary and working rates such as the most difficult expectations having a necessity to be fulfilled by the unions, The non-memberized teachers expressed that it was difficult to be fulfilled all of the expectations.

The non-member teachers, expressed that the reason of not being members of unions; the activity of deviding into different political ideologies more than education, not overseeing/protecting the teachers' rights, not thinking that they are necessary, not thinking that their works are adequate, the working style of unions focusing on different targets, following some interests, not feeling needs to do more, not wishing to be independent and not having a request not to be a member of a political group, having not enough information about unions. While most of the teachers being members of unions expressed that they didn't have any uses about being members of the unions, in the same way the non-member teachers said that they didn't see any uses of being members of unions, either.

Discussion

In this study it was seen that the members and non-members teachers' most basing expectations were developing all teachers' employee rights, but also the memmbers and non-members teachers explained that it was the most difficult activity to fulfill these expectations. This situation may be interpreted such as a sign of feeling insecurity related to education unions. But on the other hand the researches show that against all ods, the unions are thought by the teachers to be the most reliable foundations to protect the personal rights. According to the results of the researches done by Ulutaş and Sönmez (2011), the most of the participants explained that the unions were the organizations to mostly protect the personal rights.

The member teachers expressed that the reson of being not to be able to be democratic; derived from having comlately political aim, behaving ideologically, being there to try to carry out different goals. While the unions developed new policies beside international and national problems it is necessary for them to be aware of problems derived from their internal structure and to put forth these problems correctly and objectively. For that reason the unions must organize new researches and support them to find out the expectations and to determine the profiles of their members (Uçkan and Kağıncioğlu, 2008).

Member and non-member teachers explained that the quantity/amount of the unions were excessive. For trying to solve this problem, the member and non-member teachers expressed that it was necessary for them to gather under the same roof and they must behave only on behalf of education.

Conclusion

All these results show that the teachers' point of views about the present unions were not completely positive. The teachers especially expressed that there were too many unions, inability of their administrators and they were disturbed from the relations between the unions and politics

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