

Public and Private School Teachers' Opinions about Distributed Leadership¹

Mahire ASLAN
Inönü University Education Faculty

Aslı AĞIROĞLU BAKIR
Turgut Özal Anatolian High School

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions of public and private school teachers about distributed leadership and examining the results in terms of some variables. As a research model, descriptive survey has been used. The target population of the study is composed of 3283 public school teachers, and 116 private school teachers. The sample of the study is constituted of 728 teachers who are chosen from this universe by cluster sampling method. The document that provides data for the research is a scale which has been created by the researcher and named as "Distributed Leadership Scale for School Organization". The research results indicated that, "School culture" dimension has the highest values in both of the school types. Private school teachers' perceptions are higher in "taking responsibility" dimension. The perception of distributed leadership of men is higher in both public and private schools when compared to the women.

Keywords: *Distributed Leadership, leadership, public and private school*

SUMMARY

Introduction

Schools and teachers are accepted as the main units of education process in most of the modern world. Schools, in which many aspects of applications can be seen as political, economic and social, are also needed to have principals with some qualifications. However, it is not enough to have only a well-qualified principal to achieve the expected development and improvement conditions. Here comes the idea of distributed leadership. There are many theoretical or empirical researches (Bennet at al, 2003; Bolden, 2007; Gronn, 2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2008; Harris, 2003, 2004, 2008;

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Hopkins and Jackson, 2002; Leithwood at al, 2007; O'Neill, 2002; Spillane, 2003, 2005; Spillane at al, 2008) based on distributed leadership in the last two decades. Distributed leadership approach criticises the idea of heroic leadership. Even if heroic leadership stories sound attractive at first, they also make clear that this kind of leadership point of view carries some inadequacies to solve the problems of complex societies, as well (Spillane, 2006). In today's world, heroic leadership is changing its place with (replacing by) the distributed leadership which includes the idea that problems can be solved by the help of followers and employees and organizational development must be in the core of goals (Woods, 2010, s. 5). Distributed leadership attach importance to the professional knowledge and skills instead of formal position or the role. It is a dynamic process containing parents, students, teachers, directors and even the people in the neighbourhood (Bolden, Petrov and Gosling, 2009, s. 257).

It wouldn't be correct to consider distributed leadership as a recipe to find and solve all the problems for all the school organizations as because there isn't a best and one way to do this. However, it can be used as a tool to realize deep analysis and to inference for the leadership. Such kind of a tool would make us see and analysis the leadership from a different window and let us find a new road map to develop the school organization in a desired way (Spillane, 2006, s. 8-10).

Purpose

Distributed leadership is a relatively new research area in our country. In the recent years, an interest has been aroused towards the topic as it has been widely investigated in the foreign studies. By the help of this study, it is hoped to improve the leadership studies in our country and enlarge the application of distributed leadership in school organizations. By keeping these points in mind, the purpose of this study is to define the perceptions of public and private school teachers about distributed leadership and examining the data in terms of some variables.

Method

In the research, as a research model descriptive survey has been used. The target population of the study is composed of 3283 public school teachers, and 116 private school teachers who work at different schools that locate in the centre of Malatya in the period of 2011-2012 education year. The sample of the study is constituted of 728 teachers who are chosen from this universe by cluster sampling method. The document that provides data for the research is a scale which has been created by the researcher and named as "Distributed Leadership Scale for School Organization". To analyse the obtained data, *t* test and variance analysis (ANOVA-ONEWAY) have been used. The level of significance is accepted as .05 / .01.

Findings

The research results indicated that, there is a significant difference between the public and private school teachers' opinions on total. The perception of distributed leadership is higher in private schools in comparison to public schools. "School culture"

dimension has the highest values in both of the school types. Private school teachers' perceptions are higher in "taking responsibility" dimension.

The perception of distributed leadership of men is higher in both public and private schools when compared to the women. In both school types, pre-licenced teachers' perceptions towards distributed leadership are higher than university graduates. In private schools, teachers who have 21 or more years of experience have a higher level of perception about distributed leadership when compared to the others. Classroom teachers' perceptions are higher than social studies teachers' perceptions in public schools.

Discussions and Conclusions

This study aimed at investigating the perceptions of public and private school teachers about distributed leadership and examining the results in terms of some variables. The results of the study show that private school teachers' perception of distributed leadership is higher when compared to the public schools. Besides this, the highest scores are obtained in the "school culture" dimension in both of the school types. This result can be accepted as a proof for the tries to create a positive school culture and gain some success in this area in the country. The perceptions of teachers in "School resources" dimension are higher in private school and maybe it is not a surprising result. However, the scores say that there is also some standards in public schools which have caused the teachers moderately accept the given statement.

Study also examines the teachers' perceptions in terms of some variables. In this case, there is an interesting result that indicates in both of the school types the men's scores are higher when compared to the women's. This result maybe best explained by the cultural codes of the society. Men, who have had the chance of getting directory positions easier than the women in schools, may have more positive perception towards the position in their school.

