

An Investigation of Primary School Teachers' Communication Satisfaction

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine primary school teachers' satisfaction with communication within their schools and also determine whether there is a significant difference among scores obtained from communication satisfaction dimensions with regard to teachers' gender and type of the school that teachers are employed. The sample consisted of 741 teachers employed in 33 primary schools in the province of Mersin. The data were gathered by "Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire" developed by Downs and Hazen (1977) after adapting into Turkish by the researchers and then analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-test. Analysis revealed that the teachers satisfied with some communication satisfaction dimensions while they were undecided about some dimensions. Moreover, there were significant differences between the scores on each communication satisfaction dimension regarding type of school although there were no significant differences among the scores on each communication satisfaction dimension, except personal feedback, regarding gender.

Keywords: Organizational communication, communication satisfaction, primary school teachers

SUMMARY

Organization is composed of some number of individuals who desire to achieve some set of goals, recognize that goals are best achieved by cooperation rather than independent action, gather whatever materials and information, and return the modified materials and information to the organizational environment in order to obtain satisfactory rewards (Book et al., 1980). This definition of organization emphasizes that communication process is an essential component of any organizational action and central to the control, coordination, and survival of organizations. Goldhaber et al. (1978) stated that the perceptions of satisfaction, climate, and information adequacy become main variables in communication research when organizational communication is approached from the perception/attitudes or the perception perspective. According to this perspective, employees' cognitive and affective perceptions of the organization influence their behaviors in the organization. With the perception perspective,

communication satisfaction emerges as an important organizational variable because it is seen as a multidimensional construct examining employees' perceptions about different forms of communication, such as the amount of information employees receive, the organization's communication climate, the receptivity of upward communication, and employees' frequency of interaction (Clampitt & Downs, 1993; Downs & Hazen, 1977; Hecht, 1978; Simpson, 1988).

Specifically, communication satisfaction is defined as the overall degree of satisfaction that individual feels from her/his total communication environment (Downs & Hazen, 1977; Gülnar, 2009). It is frequently observed in the literature that communication satisfaction consists of eight dimensions, namely communication climate, supervisor satisfaction, media quality, horizontal informal communication, organizational integration, personal feedback, organizational perspective, and subordinate communication.

Research has shown that effective and satisfactory communication contributes organizational effectiveness and performance in association with many organizational variables, such as job satisfaction, organizational identity, organizational culture, organizational commitment and motivation, organizational citizenship, and communication skills (Carrière & Borque, 2009; Eroğlu & Özkan, 2009; Fournier, 2008; Goris, 2007; Konning & Jang 2007; Nakra, 2006; Pişiren, 2010).

Education establishments engage a wide variety of communication to realize the basic tasks -teaching- as with most organization. It is thought that like employees from various sector, teachers may be most satisfied with information that helps them make sense of their situation through explaining how their jobs fit into the organizational mission, policies and plans, and about relationships with key constituencies in their workplace.

Purpose of the Study

Given the importance of communication satisfaction to organizational functioning, the purpose of this study is to examine the communication satisfaction of primary school teachers at their schools. This study also aimed at determining whether there is a difference among communication satisfaction dimensions with regard to teachers' gender and type of the school employed. With this aim, the following research questions were answered:

1. What are primary school teachers' satisfaction levels with communication climate, supervisor satisfaction, media quality, horizontal informal communication, organizational integration, personal feedback and organizational perspective as communication satisfaction dimensions in Mersin?
2. Is there a significant difference among scores obtained from communication satisfaction dimensions with regard to type of the school that teachers are employed?
3. Is there a significant difference among scores obtained from communication satisfaction dimensions with regard to teachers' gender?

METHOD

The sample of this study consisted of 741 teachers employed at primary schools in Mersin. Out of 741 teachers, 568 were from state school (% 76,7) and 173 were from private school (%23.3). Moreover, out of 741 students, 455 were female (61.4%) and 286 were male (38.6%). In order to determine the communication satisfaction of teachers at the primary schools, the Downs-Hazen Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) developed by Downs and Hazen (1977) was used after adapting into Turkish through confirmatory factor analyses by the researchers and then analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-test.

RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS

The results of the analysis revealed that teachers satisfied with each communication satisfaction dimensions in various levels. As a result of rating the mean of sub-scales based on five-point scale, it was observed that teachers satisfied with *horizontal informal communication* ($\bar{X}_{\text{horizontal communication}} = 3.92$), *organizational integration* ($\bar{X}_{\text{integration}} = 3.68$) and *organizational perspective* ($\bar{X}_{\text{organizational perspective}} = 3.56$); while they were neutral with respect to satisfaction with the dimensions of *personal feedback* ($\bar{X}_{\text{feedback}} = 3.35$), *supervisory communication* ($\bar{X}_{\text{supervisor communication}} = 3.31$), *media quality* ($\bar{X}_{\text{media quality}} = 3.47$) and *communication climate* ($\bar{X}_{\text{communication climate}} = 3.29$). There were also significant differences between the scores on each communication satisfaction dimension regarding type of school that teachers are employed (private or state). Analysis revealed that there is significant differences among *organizational perspective* [$t(739)=-8.53, p<.05$], *organizational integration* [$t(739)=-8.54, p<.05$], *personal feedback* [$t(739)=-5.20, p<.05$], *supervisory communication* [$t(739)=-7.06, p<.05$], *horizontal informal communication* [$t(739)=-5.55, p<.05$], *media quality* [$t(739)=-5.85, p<.05$] and *communication climate* [$t(739)=-9.19, p<.05$] regarding type of school that teachers are employed (private or state).

There were no significant differences among the scores on each communication satisfaction dimension, except personal feedback, regarding gender. The results showed that there is no significant difference among the dimensions of *organizational perspective* [$t(739)=-.631, p<.05$], *organizational integration* [$t(739)=-.667, p<.05$], *supervisory communication* [$t(739)=-.37, p<.05$], *horizontal informal communication* [$t(739)=1.00, p<.05$], *media quality* [$t(739)=.430, p<.05$] and *communication climate* [$t(739)=-.63, p<.05$] regarding gender, while there is only a significant difference between females and male in *personal feedback* [$t(739)=-.212, p<.05$].

In conclusion, it was observed that teachers were neutral with respect to satisfaction with the dimensions of personal feedback, supervisory communication, media quality and communication climate. With this respect, it may be stated that teachers feel they are not receiving timeous information about what is expected of them and how they are doing. It seems that these communication dimensions needs to be

taken into consideration and the communication environment of the school should be promoted in order improve the teachers' working conditions by the administrators.