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ADMINISTRATOR BEHAVIOURS THAT MAKE TEACHERS FEEL VALUED

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Abstract:

The state of school administrators valuing their teachers is considered to be interrelated with topics linked to behaviour (i.e. management and organizational theories; motivation; leadership; and organizational culture, loyalty, support, image, justice, and burnout). The aim of the present study was to identify behaviours that dignify teachers. The study aimed to determine what teachers and administrators understand from the concept of "valuing" and how administrative behaviours that made teachers feel valued affected them (i.e. affectively, cognitively). A qualitative research methodology was adopted in the study. Maximum variation sampling strategy was used to recruit the participants (n= 32). Interviews were held with participants 24 of whom were teachers and 8 were school administrators working in Bolu (Turkey). The collected data were analysed using content and descriptive analysis techniques. The results suggested that the meaning teachers and administrators attributed to the action of "valuing" included; caring about, recognition, and respect. The state of school administrators valuing their teachers was considered as "crucial" and "important". The indicators of teachers feeling valued included; administrators taking teachers' views into considerations on matters relating to the teachers and the school, appreciating teachers' achievements, listening to and solving problems, being with teachers on special occasions, and creating a healthy communication with teachers. When administrators dignify their teachers, those teachers' motivation increases, they become more content, their work efficiency increases, and they develop a sense of belonging to their schools.

Keywords: value, administration(r), principal, teacher, school

1. Introduction

Organizations are built to realize their goals and meet their employees' requirements. The high performance of employees depends on not only meeting their financial needs

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but also social and psychological ones. If managers want to receive adequate and quality service from their employees then they should meet such needs of employees. That managers value their employees is one of the important requirements for a successful organization. Valuing employees, leadership, organization and management theories, and motivation theories are among the basics that managers should be aware of.

Being valued is one of the basic needs of human beings. According to Glasser (1998), needs such as living, belonging, power, freedom, and entertainment determine human behaviours. On the other hand, nourishment, oxygen, and security are needs that enable individuals to live. As for the necessity of belonging, it includes elements such as loving others and being loved by others as well as valuing others and being valued by others. Furthermore, it is stated that human beings have three main requirements universally which are; autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Of those three, relatedness can be considered to be connected to being valued. This is because individuals feel the need to create relationships in which they feel accepted, understood, and valued.

In modern world, expecting managers to be open for communication, watching for justice, assuring confidence among their subordinates, taking their employees' ideas into consideration, informing their employees, attaching importance to job satisfaction, taking the problems of the employees into consideration, valuing their employees and so on is no longer a "luxury" (Tuzcu, Ulaş 2018). Managers should pay attention to their employees' personalities, and the work their employees do as well as their ideas. This is because employees feel the need to be appreciated, liked, and valued by their managers and other group members (Akat, Budak, Budak, 1994). Similarly, the basis of human interaction relies on mutual experience of being valued, trust, respect and dialogue (Çınkır & Çetin, 2010).

2. Literature Review

Investing on employee's education is considered as an indicator that organizations value their employees, in addition, such organizations do not want to lose the employees they invested on, and this situation positively motivates the employees of the organizations (Özler, 2013). When an organization encourages its' employees to receive training, employees start thinking that they are important to the organization and that is why the organization invests in them (Silbert, 2005).

Similarly, organizing special days and activities for employees can also make them feel that they are special (Çiçek, 2005). Staff parties, dinners, sports tournaments, trips, meetings, and similar other activities can be organized in order to meet employees' needs to feel appreciated (Ural, 2002).

Being informed about issues that relate to the organization indicates that employees are consulted to generate solutions and/or solutions to those issues thereby reinforcing the belief among employees that they are valued (Sevinç, 2015).

According to Delaney (1995), gathering the rights of employees such as holiday leave, sickness leave and casual leave in a pool, arranging the work hours according to the needs of the employees, allowing employees to bring their children to the workplace when necessary, and offering home office opportunities when needed would increase employees' loyalty to their job and reinforce the feeling that they are valued (Selen, 2016).

Referring to employees with their names, listening to their problems, thanking them, appreciating and praising their success and outstanding performance, creating an environment in which they can develop ideas collaboratively, and respecting their knowledge and expertise are among the actions that managers should do to show that they value their employees (Bakan, 2011).

Feeling that they are valued affects teachers' perceptions of the school they work in. Being part of the school culture, experiencing the feeling of belonging to the highest extent, and believing s/he is irreplaceable in the school are among factors that indicate feeling valued (Yazıcı, 2009). When they are not given any authority or decision power, an employee would start feeling that s/he is worthless and unimportant to the organization (Özler, 2013).

2.1_Motivation and valuing employees

Maslow named the fourth level of his hierarchy of needs as "esteem" which includes qualities such as respect, self-esteem and recognition. This is because, after achieving the step of "love and belonging", an individual desires for the feeling of appreciation either by individuals within their group or outside their groups (Yıldırım, 2009).

Organizations utilize a number of different motivation strategies in order to ensure that their personnel work eagerly and efficiently. Though the motivation strategies to be used can change from one organization to another or from one manager to another, the main motivation strategies are as following:

- 1) Financial tools (i.e. premiums, rewards);
- 2) Psychological tools (i.e. being appreciated, liked, valued, and asked for opinions);
- 3) Organziational and managerial tools (i.e. providing training, promotions, a more convenient or attractive job, communication, being fair and having a discipline system (Yalçın & Korkmaz, 2013; Sabuncuoğlu & Vergiliel, 2003).

Bakan (2004) stated that there are many benefits of working with motivated individuals. Those benefits include: the work is completed within the time limitations given and adheres to the standards; and employees enjoy working and perceive that they are valued (Özdemir et al., 2014).

2.2 Leadership and valuing employees

Education is the performance that the leader should possess. The following can be examples of such performance: treating all people equally and respecting them; centring professional development on learning and integrating it to the school's mission and goals; and valuing the employees and producers (Teyfur, 2011).

Watt (2002) identified that innovative school leaders should possess five basic qualities that are; having a vision, being reliable, being a guide, being positive, and being supportive. Among those, being reliable refers to school administrators being sensitive, open for communication, and paying attention to each employee's problems to make them feel valued in an effort to ensure that each employee within the school would accept the school administrator as a role model (Selçuk, 2018).

2.3 Management Theories and Valuing Employees

Factories, which came into existence following the industrial revolution, has directed scientists to find answers to the questions such as how those factories can be better managed. In the end, a number of different management theories have been developed. Theories reveal the way they approach individuals through organizational goals, formal organization, organizational structure, motivation theories and so on. Those theories start with classic theories, neo-classic theories, system and contingency theories, and continue with present theories.

The importance of the human factor has been ignored in classic management theories. In those theories, employees have been perceived like machinery and equipment and accepted as raw materials which are part of the production input and do not have any social needs. However, the fact that the human factor is completely different from other factors and the need to value employees has emerged as an undeniable truth (Şentürk, 2006). The shared and basic characteristic of classic management theories is aiming for high economic and technical efficiency, looking for the best management strategy in order to realize that goal, and not valuing humans since they are entities that could be encouraged to work a lot with incentives that have limited effects (Tüzün, 2012).

One of the developments in the area of organization and management since 1930s is the acceptance of humans as the most important source within an organization and, thus, starting to value all employees (Aktan, 2003). Neo-classic management approach considers that organizational efficiency goal can only be reached when employees are given the importance and appreciation they deserve (Çetintaş, 2016). Hawthorn experiments indicated that it was social factors rather than physical factors (i.e. work hours, relaxation) that increased efficiency (Yılmaz, 2016).

Ouchi's Theory Z is one of the studies which analysed the human dimension of management. In his Theory Z which was published in 1981, Ouchi investigated how human beings should be managed in order to get them to work efficiently. Ouchi created his Theory Z evaluating the following factors: employees' tenure of office (length of employment), the way decisions are made, the source of accountability, control mechanisms, employees' levels of expertise, and the value given to employees (Aktan, 2011).

Total Quality Management (TQM), on the other hand, is a philosophy which values humans and aims to create an organizational culture which is customer centred and strives to meet the needs of customers; which pays attention to employees' ideas and values, includes them in the management and increases their motivation in line

with management's determination, responsibility, and leadership; and which aims to make employees more active, efficient, and skilled through training (Yıldırım, 2006). One of the most important benefits of TQM is the Total Quality Manager. Leadership in TQM underlines the importance attached to employees and people through such approaches as increasing employees' motivation by providing them with continuous professional development opportunities and prioritizing customer satisfaction (Erdal & Korucuk, 2016).

2.4 Organizational Commitment and Valuing Employees

There are a number of factors that increase organizational commitment such as communication and valuing employees. Employees can better accept the changes within an organization through communication and this contributes to employees' happiness. Because this way they would feel that they are valued. Furthermore, one of the main responsibilities of every organization is to increase the quality of the work environment by encouraging humanistic values. When they feel appreciated, workers would be more committed to their job and organization (Coşkun, 2010). If employees are supported by the organization, if they are valued and not left alone then this would help increase their organizational commitment (Taştan et al., 2014, p. 122).

Managers should value their employees. They should ensure that the employees work in a comfortable and peaceful environment, work conditions should be improved, employees' ideas should be valued, their complaints should be taken into consideration, and the managers should deal with employees' problems. If employees or participants in an organization feel that they are valued, then, their emotional, normative, and continuance commitment to the organization would increase (Özdevecioğlu, 2003, p. 126).

Valuing employees increases organizational commitment. The motivation of a teacher who feels valued would increase and s/he may start working harder in order to respond to the attention that is paid to him/her (Güdücü, 2008). Allen and Meyer (1990, p. 17) underlined the management valuing their subordinates as a factor that impacts upon emotional commitment (Balay, 2000).

2.5 Organizational Support and Valuing Employees

Organizational support refers to the extent to which an employee feels and thinks s/he is valued (Naktiyok & Kızıl, 2018). Employees' belief with regards to how much they are valued and appreciated is defined as perceived organizational support (Doğan, 2014). Financial incentives such as rewards and promotions and non-financial incentives such as being valued and appreciated contribute to employees' perceptions of feeling important, thereby, increasing their organizational commitment. As a result, employees' work performance increases (Çınar & Yeşil, 2016). In fact, organizational support relates to employees' perceptions. Actions such as receiving messages, compliments, and approval from their managers which make employees feel valued contributes to achieving high levels of commitment among employees (Akın, 2008; İplik et al., 2014).

Cohen and Wills (1985) examined social support under four dimensions; instrumental, emotional, widespread, and informational support. Instrumental support refers to tangible support such as money, work-relief, time, and environmental support. Examples of this function include lending or donating money or belongings to someone else, or doing housework or shopping on behalf of someone else. Emotional support which comprises feelings such as sympathy, liking, understanding, acceptance, being valued, being cared for, and the need for protection is also referred to as enunciative support, deservingness support, or close support in the literature.

Organizational support, which is important for employees, is an important source to meet employees' emotional needs such as being respected, accepted, and valued (Derinbay, 2011).

2.6 Organizational Justice and Valuing Employees

The social aspects of organizational support, which are also referred to as interactional justice, refer to the quality of behaviour among individuals during the process of resource sharing. In this sense, the social aspects deal with treating employees with respect and valuing them. Organizational justice is closely related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, work performance, organizational citizenship behaviour, and quitting the job factors since it meets employees' needs such as being accepted by decision makers and being valued (Vergiliel Tüz & Sabuncuoğlu, 2013 as cited in İlişen, 2017).

Although studies to develop the quality of education are being conducted in Turkey on an ongoing basis, the problems of our education system is continuously growing. Those problems which are related to quality have been observed to mainly stem from the decrease of teachers' positive attitudes towards their job and schools. And the reason for this is the fact that education employees, teachers, are not given the importance and value that they deserve (Ünal, 2003).

The school administrator, just like the manager of any other organization, is someone who is responsible for ensuring coordination among employees, is in constant communication with them, searches for a solution when they are faced with problems - thus- making them feel valued, motivates them and helps them develop a team spirit within the school to bring out the highest performance, and tries to achieve the goals that the school administrator has previously planned (Selçuk, 2018).

Valuing employees is vital for organizational behaviour. School administrators should value the teachers in their schools. In this sense, it is considered that researching what are the behaviours that school administrators who value their teachers display and the effects of being valued on teachers will contribute to the literature.

3. Purpose of the Research

The aim of the present study is to determine administrator behaviours that make teachers feel valued. The study sought answers to the following research questions;

- 1. What do teachers and administrators understand from the concept of "valuing"?
- 2. What administrator behaviours make teachers feel valued?
- 3. How do administrator behaviours that make teachers feel valued affect teachers?

4. Method

4.1 Research Design

The present research is a descriptive study. Qualitative research methods were used to reach the goals of the study and case study design was utilized. The main characteristic of case studies is the in-depth analysis of phenomena under investigation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). In the present study teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the value given to teachers was analysed in depth.

4.2 Participants

Maximum diversity sampling strategy was used in this study. Participants had various socio-economic backgrounds, worked in different school types, had different lengths of teaching expertise, taught different subjects, and included both males and females. In line with this, a total of 32 participants (24 teachers and 8 administrators) participated in the study. Three male and three female teachers, and one male and one female administrator from a school in each level of education (pre-school, primary school, secondary school, and high school) were interviewed.

4.3 Data collection

Research data were collected using a semi-structured interview schedule developed by the researcher in line with the goals of the study. The questions were formed following the review of the literature. Following the development of the interview questions, four subject matter experts were consulted in order to ensure that the questions were understood by interviewees to maximize the benefits of conducting interviews. Moreover, a Turkish language teacher revised the questions in terms of grammar and cohesion. The interview schedule included a total five questions to gather teachers' and administrators' answers on what they understood from the concept of "valuing", to what extent they considered the concept of "valuing" to be important, what administrator behaviours were indicators of valuing teachers, what previous experiences the teachers experienced with administrators that made them feel valued or not valued, and how administrator behaviours that made teachers feel valued affected them. Following the creation of the interview schedule, the researcher visited schools and interviewed teachers and administrators during break times and their responses were recorded in writing at the time of interviews. In order to establish the validity and reliability of the study, interview data were separately analysed by the researcher and a subject matter expert, and the themes relating to the sub-research problems were determined separately.

4.4 Data analysis

Content analysis and descriptive analysis techniques were used to analyse the collected data. The interview data was grouped according to participants' responses relating to each of the sub-problems. After this, sub-themes were created and the frequencies of each theme were calculated. Direct quotations from teachers' and administrators' interview responses which related to particular sub-themes were included in the results section. As part of ensuring anonymity, each participant was given a code that categorized which school level s/he worked in, his/her gender, and then the number of interview being held and whether s/he is a teacher or administrator. Pre-school was coded as "PreS", primary school as "PriS", secondary school as "SS", high school as "HS", male participants as "M", female participants as "F", principals as "P", deputy principals as "DP", and teachers as "T".

5. Findings

5.1 Findings on the first interview question

Teachers and administrators were asked what they understood from the concept of "valuing" and the following responses were received; caring for (f = 10), respecting (f = 10), accepting the existence of (f = 3), trusting (f = 2), appreciating to the extent of the skills someone has (f = 2), and taking seriously (f = 1). Direct quotations in relation to this sub-research problem are included below:

- "...making people feel that they are important, the respect shown to someone's personality." (SSF1)
- "...accepting the existence of someone, meeting his/her needs, trying their best in reaching this goal, understanding." (PreSF2)
- "...trusting teachers, supporting the job they do, and trusting their knowledge." (HSF1)
- "...appreciating to the extent of the skills someone has." (SSM2)
- "...the importance given to someone, taking seriously." (SSM3)

5.2 Findings on the second interview question

Teachers and administrators were asked what administrator behaviours made them feel valued. Teachers and administrators reported the following actions as indicators of being valued: if asked for opinions and are listened to (f = 14), if achievements are appreciated (f = 14), if the administrator listens to problems and tries to find solutions (f = 13), if the administrator tries to establish a healthy communication [f = 9] i.e. saying "good morning!" in the mornings (f = 4), asking "how are you?" (f = 2), administrators paying attention to the way they speak, administrators saying "come on in!" when

teachers go to their room, and not judging the teacher in case of a negative incident], if the administrator is fair (f = 7), if the administrator tries to help teachers when they experience problems (f = 4), if decisions are made together (f = 3), if administrators are with teachers on special occasions (i.e. birthday, loss of a family member, the birth of a new family member, wedding, f = 3), if the administrator trusts the teacher and assigns responsibilities (f = 3), if the administrators backs teachers up (i.e. in interactions with parents, f = 3), if administrators support the teachers (i.e. in the activities teachers want to carry out in school, f = 2), and it would vary from one person to another (f = 1). The following are direct quotations from participants in relation to this question:

"If the administrator asks us our opinions about the issues relating to the school and if s/he backs us up in our communication with parents." (PriSM2)

"If what we do is appreciated, if our opinions are asked in issues relating to us, if the administrators ask how we are, if they say 'good morning!' to us, and if they ask us 'can I help you?' when they see us having problems." (PriSF3)

"If they treat us fairly, if they are objective, and if they respect the work teachers do." (DPPriSF)

"If the administrators say 'good morning!', if they meet our needs and solve our problems with regards to our classrooms, if they do not make it difficult when we need to ask for permissions." (PreSF4)

5.3 Findings on the third interview question

In the last interview question, administrators and teachers were asked how administrator behaviours that would make them feel valued would affect them (i.e. emotionally, behaviourally, and spiritually). Teachers and administrators responded to this question by stating that; teachers' motivation increases (f = 23), their performance increases (f = 16), they become happier (f = 9), their efficiency increases (f = 8), they start developing a sense of belonging to the school (f = 4), their achievement increases (f = 4), they start caring more for the institution (f = 4), their sympathy increases (f = 3), the quality increases (f = 2), they positivity increases (f = 2), they become more eager to develop projects (f = 2), they start developing a sense of responsibility (f = 2), and others (f = 7, it positively affects family life, adaptation levels increase, trust is established, mistakes become less visible, a peaceful environment is created, the teachers start liking their profession, and morale increases). Extracts from interviewees' responses on this question are provided below:

"The quality of education will be better. I will come [to school] motivated. I will be happy and I will do my job passionately." (PreSF4)

"My performance will increase significantly; I will have peace of mind and will work more eagerly. New ideas allow the development of projects. It will contribute to the positive promotion of the school. If they [teachers] are not appreciated then they would only do the routine work." (HSM2)

"Work efficiency and eagerness increases. It positively impacts the work." (PriSM1)

"It will increase the sense of belonging to the school, prevent conflicts in the school, and increase efficiency." (SSPM)

6. Results

- 1) For administrators and teachers, the concept of "valuing" had the following meanings: appreciating, caring for, accepting the existence of, respecting, trusting, and appreciating people to the extent of their characteristics.
- 2) It was found that the indicators of "valuing" were when the administrators took teachers' ideas into consideration on matters relating to the school, appreciated teachers' achievements, listened to teachers' problems and tried to solve them, were with teachers on special occasions, established a healthy communication, were fair to teachers, helped teachers when they seemed to have trouble, trusted the teachers and assigned them with responsibilities, and made teachers feel they were backed up by the administrators.
- 3) The impact on teachers when the administrators valued them included the following: increased motivation and performance, happiness, increased efficiency, development of a sense of belonging, increased success, caring for school, increased levels of sympathy, and increased quality of teaching.

7. Discussion

The present study found that teachers felt most valued when their ideas were asked by administrators on matters relating to their school. Appreciating the ideas that employees put forward causes employees to feel valued (Önen & Tüzün, 2005 as cited in Yaman, 2015). Asking teachers for their opinion, in a way, indicates that they are part of the administration. Making employees' part of the administration system is vital to positively motivate them. Teachers' integration to the organization would increase when they perceive that they are part of the organization and they are valued. And, certainly, the organization will attain an eager and efficient worker (Sabuncuoğlu & Tüz, 2008 as cited in Özler, 2013). Furthermore, participation in decision making is another tool that is used to motivate employees. Including employees in decision making processes is one of the most important indicators for making employees feel valued (Özler, 2013).

Teachers whose achievements are appreciated feel that they are valued. The need for feeling valued is part of the esteem section of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This

need can be met in various ways such as being appreciated, receiving a promotion, a salary in accordance with someone's status, and reputable opportunities. The administrator who understands the theory would highlight teachers' efforts in front of an audience. Administrators can appreciate teachers' efforts and select the teacher who makes an effort as "the teacher of the month" or "the teacher of the week". The administrator can get the teacher to explain their efforts in front of an audience. The teachers whose need for respect is not met would not trust the school or the administration and would abstain from taking responsibility, s/he would feel insecure in terms of his/her efforts and become discouraged (Erdem, 1997).

This study found that teachers' motivation increased when they felt valued by the mangers. Value is significantly important concept for individuals. The more value given to an individual, the higher his/her motivation becomes. More specifically, administrators' appraisal of employees' work is a vital tool in increasing their motivation. What is important is that administrators adopt a fair and balanced way of appraising employees. Perception of an employee that s/he is appraised in a fair manner can increase his/her motivation (Koçak, 2013). The most important psychological affect that directs employees to work effectively and efficiently is motivation. Creation of an eagerness to work without making employees feel afraid or stressed is vital for motivation. Employees who are appreciated and paid attention to, and whose work is rewarded work more efficiently (Şentürk, 2006). In order to be successful in motivating employees, human beings should be given the value they deserve and an administration style that is based on people should be adopted. In this sense, an administration style in which the administrators know their personnel, understand the personnel's needs, expectations, and goals can create an environment of trust and respect (Gürüz & Yaylacı, 2007 ad cited in Koçak, 2013). Appraising employees' achievements, appreciating them, getting them to participate in decision making mechanisms are important motivational tools in order to create a good work environment for them (Pfeffer, 1995 as cited in Selen, 2016).

Teachers' performance and efficiency increases when the administrators value the teachers. Employees who are valued and paid attention to, and whose work is rewarded work more efficiently in organizations (Şentürk, 2006). One of the main reasons for why employees in an organization have low performance is, before anything else, not valuing the employees as "human beings" (Aktan, 2003). Actions which aim to meet employees' need to feel valued can help the creation of a team spirit and, therefore, motivate the organization to reach its goals. On the other hand, an individual who feels to be important for the organization will have increased creativity and commitment to his/her work (Ural, 2002). Employees who feel appreciated will have positive attitudes towards participating in decision making processes and help the process of making better quality decisions (Polat, 2012). Valuing people and appreciating them determines the desire to work together, collaboration, sympathy, respect, trust, efficiency, and quality (Yılmaz, 2016).

Teachers' psychology is also positively affected when school administrators value the teachers. Every human being enjoy and become happy when s/he feels valued

and s/he would emit the happiness to his/her environment (Coşkun, 2010). Being valued and appreciated positively affects job satisfaction and happiness of life, thereby, contributing to a state of psychological well-being (Deveci, 2007). Moreover, it also contributes to valuing and gaining trust (Yelboğa, 2017). Employees who are appreciated will have positive ideas and feelings about their organization (Gee, 1995 as cited in Küçük, 2005). The feelings of being appreciated, liked, and valued among employees will contribute to employees' integration to their organization (Köse & Gönüllüoğlu, 2010). Valuing employees as human beings is one of the strategies that should be adopted in order to deal with stress within an organization (Aktan, 2003). The employee wants to be appreciated not as a member of staff but rather as a human being. This way, s/he can reach psychological satisfaction (Aydın, 2008 as cited in Yaman, 2015). A teacher who feels valued by his/her school will respond in a similar way and become more determined and eager to work, and be happy with the work s/he does (Dilsiz, 2018).

8. Suggestions

- 1) Teachers consider the value given to them by their administrators to be very important. Therefore, administrators should value teachers with their actions and words.
- 2) Administrators should take teachers' ideas into consideration, appreciate their achievements, listen to their problems and try to find solutions, be with them on special occasions, and establish a healthy communication.
- 3) In-service training opportunities offered to administrators should include content such as how they can make teachers feel valued.
- 4) The impact of the value given to teachers by the administrators can be further analysed in future research in terms of organizational commitment, organizational citizenship, and organizational satisfaction.

About the Author(s)

The author's research interests include educational administration and supervision.

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