Full Length Research Paper

Examining teachers' motivation level according to school principals' humor styles

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The purpose of this research is to examine the motivation level of teachers according to school principals' humor styles. The humor styles survey and job motivation scale were used to gather data from 305 randomly selected teachers employed in primary schools in Karabük. Results indicated that 141 of the teachers claimed school principal had producer style of humor, 76 of them said that the principal had appreciator style of humor and 18 of them reported that school principal had reproducer style of humor; on the other hand, 70 teachers said that school principal had a nonhumorous nonhumorous style. In addition to this, it was detected that the motivation level of the teachers who work with nonhumorous principals were lower than those working with principals who had producer, appreciator or reproducer humor styles.

Key words: Humor, job motivation, school principal, teacher.

INTRODUCTION

The learner must attain as a high degree as possible of linguistic competence (that is, it must develop skill in manipulating the language, to the point where s/he can use it spontaneously and flexibly in order to express his intended message). Humor is an important element of our daily life. Humor can emerge in any place where the human beings exist. The human beings can be separated from other living beings not only by their thoughts but also by their laughs. Laughing, endowed as a royalty to human beings, is a power that relaxes the person mentally, socializes him/her as it only emerges in social life, connects the people and corrects the mistakes by indicating them in social life (Usta, 2005). Eroğlu (2008) defines the humor as the art of looking at life with a smile and he says that life includes numerous mysteries that facilitate life. The positive contribution of humor to our lives cannot be ignored and a healthy sense of humor, especially when the person can laugh at him/herself, is a symbol of the good and completely healthy personality (Kush, 1997). With observations, visits, works, reading, writing, teaching activities and heavy workloads in

schools, school principals have hundreds of interactions in a typical day. However, very few of them share humor (Barth, 1990). Barth (1990), by pointing out that the most deficient thing in the profession of school management is humor, says that schools are entertaining places which include a lot of funny elements in them and school principals should use their senses of humor better. On the other hand, Hurren (2006) claims that education is traditionally perceived as a very strict and disciplined activity and that schools have been transformed into quite strict places by discipline, exam results, purposes and talents and mastery they have. Besides, teachers and students often say that learning and school are not enjoyable (Hurren, 2006). This situation points out that schools have been cleared of sense of humor or humor has been underestimated in schools.

Motivation is a vital element of organizational behavior as a factor which directs and reveals the human behaviors in an organization (Örücü and Kambur, 2008). Motivation can be defined as the power that directs the behavior to target or enacts the behavior according to a purpose (Öztürk and Dündar, 2003). Job motivation is regarded as a process that empowers, feeds and directs the behavior in an organization (Leonard et al., 1999).

The sources of motivation that people have in

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workplace might be different. Intrinsic motivation is an incentive that is shaped by person's interest for a duty or a job he/she is going to do, his/her curiosity or the satisfaction he/she wants to have. Person's relish and desire for the work he/she is going to do is an important component of intrinsic motivation (Joo and Lim, 2009). If a person firstly cares the satisfaction, which he/she has while indicating a certain behavior or he was in a certain activity, we can mention about intrinsic motivation there. In intrinsic motivation, the job itself is a power because the person has fun from the work he/she carries out (Cooman et al., 2007; Lin, 2007; Littlejohn, 2008; Millette and Gagne, 2008; Osterloh et al., 2001). In other words, it is known that a person with intrinsic motivation defines his or her job funny and interesting (Gagne et al., 2010). Extrinsic motivation refers to meeting the needs indirectly by money or such things. Organizations need people to realize their purposes and they use monetary motivators to make them internalize the organizational purposes (Osterloh et al., 2001). Therefore, extrinsic motivation is caused by prize and punishment on contrary to the intrinsic motivation (Goodridge, 2006; Littlejohn, 2008). Consequently, the active use of humor by the school principals might increase the motivation of teachers. Moreover, it may affect the productivity and job satisfaction of teachers positively by developing the relationships between teachers and school principals. In this point of view it might be concluded that school principals' styles of humor play an important role in increasing the motivation of teachers.

The number of the studies that reveals the value and importance of the humor in education management and leadership is scarce. The studies on this subject have started with Philbrick (1989). Philbrick grounded his study about teaching leaders on Babad's research in which he conceptualized the humor in four different styles and he developed the humor styles scale. Four styles of humor in the scale are; (1) Appreciator, (2) Producer, (3) Reproducer, (4) Nonhumorous styles.

Appreciator style implies that people are ready to laugh and like others' jokes, and rarely make jokes. Producer style refers to producing humor. People who have producer style of humor are funny and they make jokes or make up funny stories. Reproducer humor style refers to retelling others' funny jokes and stories or making their jokes again. People of this style reproduce funny and enjoyable situations. Nonhumorous style means that people seldom laugh and they rarely make jokes. In addition to this, they almost never laugh at others' jokes (Babad, 1974). In Turkey humor is mostly considered in the areas of literature, comics, and satire. Although the studies on humor have been seen in the area of educational sciences in recent years, there has been limited number of studies about school principals' styles of humor. One of them is conducted by Özdemir and Recepoğlu (2010) entitled as "organizational health and humor", and the other one is Sepetçi (2010) study that

defines school principals' styles of humor.

The findings of this research will contribute to an understanding of the factors enabling effectiveness in each level of education management by examining the motivation level of teachers according to school principals' humor styles. On the other hand this research might contribute to the selection and evaluation of the school principals, organizing in service training to help school principals reveal their humor potential and enriching the higher education programs about education management and leadership.

The purpose of this research is to examine the motivation level of teachers according to school principals' humor styles. Therefore, following questions below were tried to be answered for this purpose: (1) What are the humor styles of the school principals?, (2) What are the motivation level of the teachers?, (3) Do the perceptions of teachers on the dimensions of motivation - team harmony, integration with the job, commitment to institution and personal development - differ significantly according to school principals' humor styles?

METHODS

Model

This is a descriptive research in the survey model which tries to detect the current situation. According to Karasar (1999) scanning models are research approaches which aim to define a past or present situation.

Participants

A total of 305 teachers employed in primary schools in Karabük in 2009 to 2010 academic year participated in the study. Random sampling method was used for participant choosing. The study sample included 142 (46. 6%) classroom teachers and 163 (53. 4%) branch teachers. Out of these teachers, 131 teachers (43%) are male and 174 teachers (57%) are female. 88 (28.9%) teachers are between the ages of 22 to 30, 112 (36.7%) are between 31 to 40, 79 (25.9%) are between 41 to 50 and 26 (8.5%) are above 51 years old. Teachers who have seniority between 1 to 5 years are 66 (21.6%), who have seniority between 6 to 10 years are 51 (16.7%), who have seniority between 11 to 20 years are 120 (39.3%) and who have seniority above 21 years are 68 (22,3%). Among the teachers who participated in the study, 248 of them have bachelor's degree (81.3%), 42 (13.7%) of them have pre-bachelors degree, 13 (4.1%) of them have master's degree and only 3 (0.9%) of them have PhD.

Instruments

Humor styles survey (HSS)

The conceptualization of the humor styles in four different categories was developed by Babad (1974) and the scale which first uses Babad humor styles categories had first been used by Philbrick (1989). The scale was translated into Turkish by Özdemir and Recepoğlu (2010). Kent (1993), Koonce (1997), Mertz (2000), Özdemir and Recepoğlu (2010), Puderbaugh (2006), Rahmani (1994), Spurgeon (1998) and Williams (1994) used this scale in their studies. Babad (1974) presented that socio-metric instruments

were better and more reliable evaluation instruments than traditional humor tests and that humor tests didn't analyze the natural behavior. On the other hand Babad (1974), Koppel and Sechrest (1970) pointed out that standard humor tests lack in validity and reliability in the evaluation of humor. Babad (1974) believes that true and valid evaluation of humor can only be possible with natural observations, self reports, and socio-metric methods in a social environment. Babad's socio-metric survey is a useful instrument. This survey enables the easy access to the followers and data collecting. Moreover, this survey provides analysis of the natural humor behavior with a socio-metric method although it cannot be observed directly. In his study in New England Society University Babad (1974) carried out a validity and reliability study which includes a large sample group (1816 participants). All the participants were asked to write the name of a person who was suitable for any of the four humor styles (appreciator, producer, reproducer and nonhumorous styles) in the university. Names of 987 students were written opposite one of these styles at least for just one time. 81 students out of those 987 students were invited to the research and 77 of them accepted to participate. Each student was given humor evaluation test, active humor test and creativity test. Students filled in personality survey as well. Then four categories of humor were delivered to the students and they were asked to choose the most suitable category for them. Their humor styles indicated obvious difference and the participants said that 77 students indicated four basic humor styles features. These selected students defined themselves in a humor style which their friends percept them to be. In other words humor styles of selected students indicate similarity with their friends' evaluations. As a result, Babad (1974) confirmed the validity and reliability of the study about four humor styles.

Rahmani (1994) conducted a study among the workers in California University to examine whether the humor style is related to the management efficacy or not. Rahmani (1994) used a socio-metric survey based on Babad's categories of four humor styles. 55 dormitory principals, 47 student affairs manager and 416 workers included in the sample of the study. Tests were applied to understand if there was a difference between the humor styles percepted by the principals and the workers. The results demonstrated that significant difference was not found between the perceptions of the principals and the workers about principal's humor style. Both principals and the workers almost agree on the humor style of the principal. As a result Rahmani (!994) proved the validity and reliability of the survey.

Job motivation scale

This scale was developed by Aksoy (2006). A likert scale of five was used for each item to detect the frequency of indicating the behavior. The scale items were answered on a rating scale from 1 "I'm not pleased at all" to 5 "I am really pleased". Yılmaz (2009) applied a factor analysis to Aksoy's scale in his thesis study entitled as "The effect of organizational culture on teachers' job motivation in educational organizations". Results of factor analysis indicated that the scale items were distributed across six factors, however it was also seen that one subscale was consisted of two items and one was consisted of one item. Hence items included in these subscales were taken out of the scale and it was re-analyzed. In the second factor analysis it had been seen that one dimension had still included only one item and it had been taken out of the scale and the factor analysis was conducted again. As a result of the repeated analyses after taking out items off the list it was seen that scale includes four dimensions and 14 items namely; team harmony (7, 12, 13, 14), integration with job (2, 5, 6, 8), commitment to job (1, 4, 9,), and personal development (3, 10, 11). Factor loadings are ranging from 0.49 to 0.78 in the dimension of team harmony, from 0.54 to 0.78 in the dimension of integration with the job, from 0.59

to 0.81 in the dimension of commitment to job, and from .43 to .73 in the dimension of personal development. On the other hand, internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.82 in the reliability study carried out by Yılmaz (2009). In this study, the general internal consistency coefficient of the job motivation scale was found 0.87. The results of factor analysis conducted by Yılmaz (2009) reveal that Kaiser Meyer-Olkin Sample measure was found 0.781. Considering these results Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value was significant and it was found 470.77. This result indicates that there is a relationship among the items of the scale.

Data analysis

The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) 16 program pack that is used in data analyses in social sciences was used for statistical analysis of the data collected by the surveys filled in correctly and fully according to the explanations in the frame of the general aims of the study. The frequency, percentage, arithmetical mean and standard deviation of the answers were calculated. Independent t-Test and One-Way ANOVA were performed to analyze the data.

FINDINGS AND COMMENTS

Humor styles of school principals

The division of the humor styles of school principals participated in the study was given in Table 1. As can be seen from Table 2, 141 (28.2%) of school principals have producer style, 76 (24.9%) of principals have appreciator style, 18 (5.9%) of principals have reproducer style and 23 (7.5%) of principals have a nonhumorous style. These results mean that most of the school principals have producer humor style. In addition, reproducer humor style was detected as the least possessed humor style of the principals.

Teachers' motivation level

The division of the teachers' perceptions about their motivation level was given in Table 2. Table 2 demonstrates that teachers have the highest motivation in "commitment to job dimension ($\overline{X}$ =3.98) and the lowest level of motivation in the dimension of integration with the job ($\overline{X}$ = 3.47).

When the standard deviation scores are analyzed, it is seen that the most homogeneous evaluation is in the dimension of commitment to job (S = 0.61) and the most heterogeneous evaluation is in the dimension of team harmony (S = 0.75).

Teachers' perceptions on "team harmony" according to school principals' humor styles

The results of the ANOVA carried out for examining the difference of teachers' perceptions on team harmony dimension of motivation compared to the school principals' humor styles were given in Table 3.

As can be seen from Table 3 there seems no difference in teachers' perceptions about team harmony dimension compared to the school principal's humor style [F(3, 301) = 1.35, p > .05]. In other words, teachers' perceptions about team harmony do not differ according to the humor styles of school principals.

Teachers' perceptions on "integration with job" according to school principals' humor styles

The results of the ANOVA carried out for detecting the difference of

Table 1. Humor styles of the school principals.

Humor style	f	%
Producer	141	46.2
Appreciator	76	24.9
Reproducer	18	5.9
Nonhumorous	70	23

Table 2. The analysis of the motivation level of the teachers employed in primary schools.

Motivation	N	$\overline{X}$	S
Team harmony	305	3.57	0.75
Integration with the job	305	3.47	0.73
Commitment to job	305	3.98	0.61
Personal development	305	3.68	0.72

Table 3. One-way ANOVA results for comparing team harmony dimension of teachers' motivation with school principals' humor styles.

Motivation	Humor style	N	$\overline{X}$	ss	sd	F	p
	Producer	141	3.61	0.58			
	Appreciator	76	3.62	0.70	3		
Team harmony	Reproducer	18	3.54	0.90	301	1.35	0.25
	Nonhumorous	70	3.41	1.00			

teachers' motivation compared to school principals' humor styles were given in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that teachers' perceptions about integration with the job dimension of motivation do not present significant difference according to the humor styles of school principals [F(3, 301) = 0.02, p > 0.05]. In other words, there is no differentiating effect of school principals' humor styles on teachers' perceptions about integration with the job.

Teachers' perceptions on "commitment to job" according to humor school principals' humor styles

The results of the ANOVA carried out for detecting the difference of teachers' perceptions about commitment to job dimension of teachers' motivation compared to school principals' humor styles were given in Table 5.

As can be seen from Table 5, teachers' perceptions about commitment to job dimension of motivation present significant difference according to the school principals' humor styles [F(3, 301) = 4.90, p < 0.05]. In other words, teachers' perceptions on commitment to job subscale differ significantly according to school principals' humor styles. In addition to this, results of LSD test illustrated that a significant difference was detected in two groups: the first group is "teachers working with principals with nonhumorous style ($\overline{X}$ = 3.78) and those working with principals with producer humor style ($\overline{X}$ = 4.08); and the second group is "teachers working with principals with nonhumorous style ($\overline{X}$ = 3.78) and those working with principals with appreciator style ($\overline{X}$ =

4.01). Besides this, the highest motivation score on commitment to job dimension belongs to teachers who work with principals with producer humor style. At this point the significant difference between motivation level of teachers who work with school principals with nonhumorous style and the motivation level of those who work with principals with appreciator, and producer styles points out that the school principals' humor styles have an important effect on defining teachers' motivation level.

Teachers' perceptions on "personal development" according to school principals' humor styles

The results of the ANOVA carried out for detecting the difference of teachers' perceptions about personal development dimension of teachers' motivation compared to school principals' humor styles were given in Table 6.

As can be seen in Table 6, teachers' perceptions about personal development dimension of motivation do not present significant difference according to school principals' humor styles F(3, 301) = 1.05, p > 0.05]. In other words, teachers' perceptions about personal development dimension of motivation do not differ according to the school principals' humor styles.

DISCUSSION

According to the schools principals' humor styles, motivation level of the teachers was examined in this study. When the primary school principals' humor styles

Table 4. One-way ANOVA results for comparing integration with the job dimension of teachers' motivation with school principals' humor styles.

Motivation	Humor style	N	$\overline{X}$	ss	sd	F	p
	Producer	141	3.47	0.64			
Integration with the job	Appreciator	76	3.48	0.77	3		
	Reproducer	18	3.43	0.83	301	0.02	0.99
	Nonhumorous	70	3.47	0.82			

Table 5. One-way (ANOVA) results for comparing commitment to job dimension of teachers' motivation with school principals' humor styles.

Motivation	Humor style	N	$\overline{X}$	ss	sd	F	p	Meaning
	Producer	141	4.08	0.46				(Nonhumorous style)↔(producer)
Commitment to job	Appreciator	76	4.01	0.64				(Nonhumorous style)↔(appreciator)
	Reproducer	18	3.75	0.91	3	4.90	0.00	
	Nonhumorous	70	3.78	0.69	301			

Table 6. One-way (ANOVA) results for comparing personal development dimension of teachers' motivation with school principals' humor styles.

Motivation	Humor style	N	$\overline{X}$	ss	sd	F	p
	Producer	141	3.74	0.59			
Personal development	Appreciator	76	3.67	0.77	3		
	Reproducer	18	3.64	0.99	301	1.05	0.36
	Nonhumorous	70	3.56	0.79			

were analyzed according to the perceptions of teachers, 141 teachers claimed that their principal had producer humor style, 76 teachers claimed that their principal had appreciator humor style, 18 teachers claimed that their principal had reproducer humor style and 70 teachers claimed that their principal had nonhumorous style. It is easily understood that nearly half of the school principals are able to produce humor. Also, Kent (1993), Koonce (1997), Mertz (2000), Özdemir and Recepoğlu (2010), Spurgeon (1998), Williams (1994) and found out that the least perceived humor style was reproducer style in their studies. Findings of their studies and our research findings seem to be parallel in that view.

Another result of the research is that the motivation of teachers is at a good level. This finding and Polat (2010) findings are parallel. When subscales are analyzed, it is seen that teachers give the highest scores to the dimension of integration with the job and that they give the lowest score to the dimension of commitment to job. In other words, teachers are pleased with their institutions, principals, and colleagues already. The fact that teachers have been in the institutions for so long and that consequently they developed positive perceptions about school and workers of the school can be presented

as a reason for that. As founded by Kocabaş (2009) being in good relationship with their colleagues motivates the teachers. Besides this, Kyriacou and Harriman (1993) put forward that being appointed to another school or changing the schools might create stress in teachers. In this case it can be thought that teachers who think that working in a different school with different principals and different teacher might create stress probably developed commitment to job to avoid that situation. On the other hand teachers' motivation level about respectfulness, payments, being appreciated and the benefit they get from the institution in the society were found relatively lower. This finding can be seen in the way that teachers do not have positive perceptions about their respectfulness in the society, the payments, level of being appreciated, and benefits they get from the institution. Kocabaş (2009) presented in his study that being at a respectful position in the society was one of the items that motivate teachers. It can be said that the idea that teachers' being at a respectful place in the society can affect their motivation level positively. Findings of the present study also reveal that motivation level of teachers' changes significantly according to the humor styles of school principals and that motivation level

of teachers working with principals with nonhumorous style is lower than the motivation level of those working with principals with reproducer, appreciator, and producer styles. On the other hand the motivation level of teachers who work with principals with producer styles is the highest, however the motivation level of teachers who work with the principals with nonhumorous style is the lowest. These findings are consistent with the findings of Crawford (1994), Dienstbier (1994), Lippitt (1982) and Murdock ve Ganim (1995). Crawford (1994), Dienstbier (1994), Lippitt (1982) and Murdock ve Ganim (1995) confirmed that leaders' use of humor increases the motivation level of the followers.

Hurren (2006) expresses that education is seen as a strict job and schools were transformed into boring places. Capel (1991) claims that being a teache is a stressful job. Going further from these points of views it might be thought that school principals who produce humor can raise the motivation level of the teachers who do a stressful job.

Another result of the research is that teachers' perceptions about team harmony, integration with the job, and personal development dimensions of motivation do not present a significant difference according to the humor styles of the school principals, however the perceptions about commitment to job dimension of motivation differ significantly according to school principals' humor styles. The highest motivation point for integration with the job dimension belongs to teachers working with school principals with producer humor style. At this point the significant difference between motivation level of teachers who work with school principals with nonhumorous style and the motivation level of those who work with principals with reproducer, appreciator, and producer styles points out that the school principals' humor styles have an important effect on defining teachers' motivation level and that it strengthens the thesis about humor as a really important leadership feature. Clouse and Spurgeon (1995) claim that there are clear evidences that support the use of humor for fostering performance of the workers in the organizations.

Conclusion

When the humor styles and the use of humor are analyzed, the finding in the studies points out that humor is an important factor in leadership (Benham, 1993; Douglas, 2008; Ellis, 1991; Hurren, 2001; Kent, 1993; Koonce, 1997; Philbrick, 1989; Puderbaugh, 2006; Rahmani, 1994; Recepoğlu and Özdemir, 2010; Williams, 1994; Vickers, 2004; Ziegler, 1982). This research that was carried out in primary school put forward findings about how effective the principals' humor styles can be in increasing teachers' motivation. School principals can develop themselves for using the humor more effectively by creating awareness or they can get professional help. Moreover the effective use of humor by school principals

can help establish a healthy school environment by developing the relationships between teachers and the principals. Humor can be evaluated as an important ability not only for school principals but also for all the positions that come to minds in education management and teaching leadership. In that case it can be said that coverage of the research can be enlarged.

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