

Full Length Research Paper

Teachers' opinions of human resources management functions in private schools

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In this research, teachers' opinions are determined based on human resources management functions in a private school. The research determined study groups with a purposive sampling method which is conducted with a qualitative research design, in the academic year, 2016 to 2017. Six teachers who work in a private school in Famagusta in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) participated in the study. The research data were collected by using a structure interview form and analyzed by content analysis and qualitative descriptive model. Two different researchers looked at the data and found out similar key words, and then themes were formed. The similarity index for inter-rater reliability was found as 90%. This is acceptable for qualitative research between five-seven categories. According to the research, Human Resources Management Functions include employee (personal selection/staffing, training and development, planning, evaluation, rewarding) and functions for the organization. All these functions are valid in educational institutions. Human research functions are successfully applied at this school where teachers reflect positive feeling towards their works and behaviors. Besides, research scope can be expanded with principals, students and parents in the scope of the subject.

Key words: Human resources management, human resources management functions, teachers and private school.

INTRODUCTION

Today, the idea that plays a key role in achieving organizational success is unavoidable. Therefore, it affects the standards of human quality which are needed in organizations. According to Argon (2015), even though the matters are enough, organizations need quality, interrogative, cooperative, productive, innovator and problem-solving people (Topaç and Aydoğan, 2005).

Providing educational services and human factors to

those who benefit from the service increases the importance of the source in educational intuitions day by day, because materials and resources used for educational purposes in such institutions cannot precede teaching staff working in the institutions. It is not possible for the individuals who are not motivated, and satisfied at work places to succeed and reach their goals at the institutions when there are no adequate materials in the

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working environment. Being a person is the main element of human resource management (HRM) and it is provided to establish desired working environment, contribute to the performance of employees and develop education in institutions (Argon, 2015).

An effective organization can be established through investments made in technology, research and development, tools and equipment. However, success and continuance requires more than these factors. It is an acknowledged fact of today's world that human and human resource is the factor leading to success or failure. Due to factors such as being influential on organizational performance, enabling the organization to rapidly reach its goals, competing successfully with other competitors, surviving unexpected environmental conditions (Cho, 2004), HRM is one of the leading factors in this process with the importance and value it gives to people.

Starting from the 1980s, the concept of personnel management was replaced by human resources management involving the meeting and developing of the knowledge, skills and needs of employees (Güler, 2006). Although these two concepts show similarities, HRM is considered as a more comprehensive phenomenon. In today's world, due to the changes and developments in the organization of employees, economy, employment, union rights and working life lead to the replacement of the term personnel management by HRM. Organizations implement various strategies in order to survive the competition and exhibit exceptional performance. Organizations with such goals aim to appoint right people to right positions and use their own resources, especially human resources in the most efficient and effective way possible (Kwasi, 2014).

Hence, with the awareness that the most effective competitive advantage is a good human resources management during the transition to information society, the concept of personnel management was replaced by human resources management (Erdemir, 2014). This new understanding, which represents a more modern approach towards personnel management, takes the human factor to the center of the organization and keeps it on the forefront (Tunçer, 2012).

Educational organizations and human resources management

In order for countries to reach contemporary levels, gain competitive advantage over other countries the human resource they possess is the most significant factor. It is the education system's duty to equip those people with the skills and features that will help them overcome today's problems (Türkmen, 2008).

Also, the productivity of educational organizations depend on human factor because human is the most

efficient resource in today's world where information is on the foreground (Paksoy and Özbezek, 2013). It is crucial for the school, as a productive sub-system of education system, to continuously update its human resources and have a structure that can adapt to change (Argon and Demirer, 2015).

Educational organizations are influenced by the new developments in the society and administrators are expected to quickly adapt to those changes. It is an inevitable fact for schools, as dynamic systems, to experience changes and innovations (Taymaz, 2011). The primary duty of the school administration is to use the human and object resources available in the most effective way possible in accordance with the school objectives. The successful fulfillment of this duty depends on administrations appointing teachers considering their expectations and roles (Bursalioglu, 2012).

School, with its solidarity-centered nature, should create an effective educational setting by establishing a sense of "us" rather than "I-you" dichotomy. This situation requires the dominance of team spirit and the sense of us in all organizational relations (Başkan and Aydın, 2000; Saylan, 2013).

Naturally, putting human to the center suits the structure and goals of educational organizations. Productivity in educational organizations is achieved not through financial resource but via putting human to the center. Thus, the value of an organization is evaluated through its HRM. Management of educational organizations should use human resource for efficiency and productivity in accordance with organization's objectives (Argon, 2014). It is necessary to place the human resources unit of the school at production level to create a combination of harmony. It is needed to determine the number of teachers to be employed, select right people with the required knowledge, skills and abilities, identify the needs and meet them, evaluate the performance, train to improve skills, provide payment equal to employees' success and provide appropriate setting to help them fulfill their duties (Saylan, 2013).

One of the main components that make education meaningful and productive is the teacher. Teacher is the person who teaches, guides students, motivates them, tries to solve students' problems and has the academic knowledge and skills of their profession. A democratic management giving importance to people is required to make teachers happy individuals in their workplace, reveal the skills they have, actively use their potentials and meet organizational objectives. It is an important duty of the school administration to merge organizational objectives with individual goals. Teachers, who believe that their personal goals would be met, will identify with the organization by developing a sense of belonging and this will lead to higher awareness of professional productivity (Karaköse, 2005 as cited in ; Saylan, 2013).

It is possible for educational organizations to adapt to

today's conditions and develop only by equipping teachers with new skills and knowledge and administrations managing effectively. A variety of variables such as teachers being happy satisfied, motivated by their profession, their motivation and defining their personal needs and goals clearly are all under the responsibility of HRM. If a school's organizational culture places importance on people and the value of human resource is believed in, HRM can work successfully in that setting (Türkmen, 2008).

In a society with rapid developments and changes, schools need to make changes in terms of structure and function. In today's world, countries have turned into industrial societies. Hence, societies acknowledged that scientific information is growing rapidly. In this regard, changes like developments in communication tools, increased communication intensity should exist in school's structure and management understanding. Private schools have adapted to these changes more easily with the help of the physical conditions and financial opportunities they have.

Such schools place a lot of importance to technological developments along with foreign language education. They are in a leading position in education as they benefit from such developments, equip their classrooms with modern tools and gadgets which enable students to conduct all kinds of research and investigation and provide experiential learning. With the impact of these innovations in private schools, the role expected from teachers has changed as well. Teachers became not only the person to explain knowledge, but also to try and change students' behavior, act as a role-model for them, and exhibit behavior towards developing students' personality. In addition to all these, teachers form the symbol and institutional image of the organization they work for (Cent, 2007).

The main human resource of education system, thus the school, is education workers. Management of human resource is a management function needed to meet their physical, societal and psychological needs. The better this function is fulfilled by the administrators, the more teachers identify with and feel connected to their school. Such a commitment is a pre-requisite for fulfilling schools' objectives and maintaining its existence (Başaran, 2000; Cent, 2007).

One of the most important roles of HRM within an organization should be to analyze how teachers can work better together and increase their productivity by offering systems towards working together. Teachers feel proud to be a member of a school which encourages them to do better things, motivates them for personal development and fulfills their objectives (Ersen, 2003).

Functions of human resources management

All of the activities organized towards both the

organization's effectiveness and the resource itself for the effective use of human resources, as an important force in reaching organizational goals, create HRM functions (Yüksel, 2000).

Organizations can clearly express their policies through these functions. While Kwasi (2014) suggests the functions of HRM under 5 dimensions as hiring of employees, rewarding them, their development, their relations and their guidance; Yüksel (2007) handles them under two categories as functions directed to the organization (union relations) and functions directed to human (supplying human resource, guiding it, developing it, and meeting the value of their effort). Administrators successfully implementing these functions bring organizational success along (Argon and Kaya, 2016).

Functions of HRM can be examined in five different ways as: determining and planning human resource; finding the position; training-development; inter-personal relations; motivation of employees; and rewarding (Karaca, 2009). The scope of recognizing function involves job analysis, job descriptions, and performance evaluation, work accidents that may occur in the organization, conducting investigations regarding personal lives of employees, monitoring human labor movements within and outside the organization.

In educational organizations, selecting the position is determining the human quality and quantity for future eras and designing of an appropriate program. It is the planning of upcoming years by considering which teacher will retire when and leave school, who can be promoted to manager and when or assume which teacher will leave school and when. Determining the position is a comprehensive process and it works to select the candidates that meet the pre-determined criteria and has the best potential among those who applied to the school for work (Açıklalın, 1994; Argon and Demirer 2015).

With the human resources practices, effective management of the school is possible and it should be determined through those practices who and why type of skills are needed for the successful implementation of instructional activities (Akyol, 2008; Argon and Demirer, 2015). Thus, school administrators who are responsible for school management in terms of HRM take on an important role (Dağlı and Uzunboylu, 2007). It is important from various dimensions to train school administrators in a way to overcome problems through change strategies formed in relation to education system by central administrations, and anticipate change as school and society-based (Şişman, 2014).

It is believed that school administrators should aim for information-based management style and teachers to be continuous learners and followers of changing information in order to make information effective, discover and use it properly in schools (Güçlü and Sotirofski, 2006). Educational organizations contribute to societal development. Hence, it is important for individuals responsible for the management of human

Table 1. Personal information of teachers participating in the study.

| Variable | | Frequency (f) |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Gender | Female | 6 |
| Age | 30 or below | 5 |
| | 36-40 years | 1 |
| Professional experience | 1-5 years | 5 |
| | 16-20 years | 1 |
| Graduation field | Classroom teacher | 1 |
| | Subject teacher | 5 |

resource in schools be competent HRM professionals (Argon and Demirer 2015).

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study adopts qualitative design through qualitative descriptive model as it aims to investigate teachers' opinions regarding the applicability of HRM functions in a school. Qualitative research is considered as "a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of the data" (Bryman, 2004). According to Salkind (2006), "a case is a descriptive research method used to study an individual in a unique setting or situation in an intense manner".

Context, population and sample

Teachers are recruited in two stages: First, they have meeting with management and human resources and in this meeting teachers have to give their curriculum vitae (CV). If they are acceptable they have to give demo lesson approximately for forty minutes. Compared to the public school, the private school has more resistant building, safer playground, and their classrooms have smart boards where public schools do not have. It has full time education system, while public schools offer half-day education.

Six teachers participated voluntarily in the study. The study group of the research consists of teachers, who were selected through convenient sampling as one of the purposive sampling methods, working in a private school in Famagusta District. The study was conducted with six teachers who volunteered to participate in the study. The main understanding in this sampling method is the study of all situations that are convenient and easily accessible. In this regard, this method was preferred to provide the researcher with speed and easy implementation (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). The personal information of the participating teachers is presented in Table 1.

The study involved six female teachers who differ from the other teachers in the school in terms of age, experience and subject-matter. Five of the six were subject teachers and the other was classroom teacher. Their ages ranged between thirty and forty; their years of teaching experience ranged between five to twenty years. Having a study group of contemporary and experienced participants in today's human resources management gives room to conduct a

more in-depth analysis of the data available even with limited number of participants. Therefore, this study opted to work with six participants for more effective and detailed data analysis.

The present study was conducted at a private school in Famagusta in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) during 2016 to 17 academic year. There are approximately twenty students in each classroom at the school. In the private school, a student learns basic knowledge of art in parallel with skill levels. They teach students how to think and expand their vision by doing brainstorming about the subject in the lesson. Within the academic period accompanied by perception, thinking, visual, aural and tactual actions, students express, imagine, research and personalize their observations, impressions, feelings and thoughts about environment. Also, the school has success in too many areas like sports, chess, music and art. Moreover, the school shows academically success within the writing competition between the other schools. The school which loves sport even in pre-school period, students meets the sport at the 3rd grade.

Data collection tool

The data for this study were collected through the structured interview forms developed by the researcher. Structured interview questions allow the researcher to compare and contrast the responses of different participants (Mackey and Gass, 2005). Such strictly controlled interviews enable the interviewee to focus on the target topic. There is little flexibility in the questions as the researcher follows a pre-prepared detailed interview guideline (Dörnyei, 2007). Relevant literature was thoroughly reviewed while forming the structure interview questions and expert academic opinions were asked for content validity. The questions of the structured interview are as follows:

- (1) Is there a need for human resources unit in a private school? Please explain.
- (2) What are your opinions regarding the functions of the human resources unit existing in your school?
- (3) What do you think should be the functions of a human resources unit?

Structured interview forms have an open and clear focus in its almost natural conversational nature (Dörnyei, 2007). At the same time, it helps participants to write down their thoughts and ideas. In this regard, participants were asked to explain their ideas in written form in order to prevent Hawthorne effect and avoid subjectivity in the study. In order to achieve this goal, participants were given

Table 2. Opinions of teachers regarding why HR Unit should exist in a school.

| Variable | Participant opinions | N |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Functions for employees | Supplying, selecting and hiring staff | 2 |
| | Training-development | 1 |
| | Career planning | 1 |
| | Personal development | 1 |
| Functions for the organization | Networking | 1 |
| | Organizational development | 1 |

interview form via first-hand and asked to fill it in within a week. At the end of the week, face-to-face interviews were held to collect the data.

Data collection procedure

Consent forms were attached to the scale and teachers were asked to sign and submit the form before they started responding to the scale.

Data analysis procedure

The analysis of the qualitative data gathered in the study was conducted via content analysis by following its steps: defining the themes, coding, classification and labelling (Miles and Huberman 1994; Patton 2002). Two different researchers looked at the data and found out similar key words and then themes were formed. The similarity index for inter-rater reliability was found as 90%; this is acceptable for qualitative research between five-seven categories (Hartmann, 1977; Stemler, 2004). In order to analyze teacher interviews, the similarities and differences of the responses were coded and categorized. The important issues, recurring themes and keywords for each interview question were identified and recorded on the left and right margins of the interview papers. The main topic of each interview question was used as the theme and keywords related to each other were put under relevant categories and classified under themes. During this process, no changes were made to participants' responses in order to emphasize the collected codes; descriptive analysis technique was used and participants were coded as T1, T2, and T6 as their real identities were kept confidential due to ethical concerns.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study and their discussion will be presented under this section. As can be seen in Table 2, all six teachers stated, with their reasons, that all schools should have an HR unit. Examples of these opinions are responses of T1, "*All private institutions need a front management unit*", and T6 "*We need a good human resources unit as our profession is related to human relations.*" Additionally, when the responses are examined, it is seen that the answers originate as two main themes. As for functions directed to the employees, supplying, selecting and positioning employees (n=2),

training, development (n=1), career planning (n=1) and personal development (n=1) were expressed; whereas, environmental relations (n=1) and organizational development (n=1) from functions directed to the organization were mentioned. This situation is indicated through the responses of T2 "*All private institutions should have a human resources unit. Because it is needed to keep the relations and work done in parallel and the school taking successful steps.*" T4 "*An HR expert can examine the personnel in more detail.*", T5 "*It is important for maintaining employee and parent satisfaction.*" Sharma (2015) suggested that teachers can benefit from HR units in terms of multiple factors such as motivation, career development, satisfaction, and performance.

Additionally, in a more recent study, Runhaar (2017) argued that proper HRM systems should consist of AMO Ability (staffing, professional development; Motivation (performance appraisal, reward system; and Opportunity (job design and participation) Both studies support the findings of the current study regarding why there is a need for HR units in schools and how teachers can benefit from them.

When the teachers' opinions regarding HRM functions in schools are reviewed from Table 3, satisfaction with the human resources unit is seen in terms of schools' institutionalism (n=4), HRM functions providing ease in many areas (n=2), HR unit bringing success (n=2) and having works go in parallel in schools (n=2). As one of the participants, T2 stated "*It is a motivating unit trying to achieve success.*", T3 "*They offer us ease and advantage in many areas due to their institutionalism.*", T6 "*Generally, I am very happy, I feel that my performance is increasing.*" These findings show similarities with the human resources functions suggested in the relevant literature. However, one of the participants stated that the human resources unit in their school is not functioning effectively. Parallel to the findings of the current study, Islam (2016), in his study on electronic HRM practices, highlighted the crucial role of the core functions in HRM practices and argued that these functions become easier and smoother to implement through e-HRM systems.

When Table 4 is examined in terms of teachers'

Table 3. Participant opinions regarding HRM functions implemented in the school.

| Variable | Participant opinions | N |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Functions for employees | Providing support | 2 |
| | Performance | 1 |
| Functions for the organization | Institutionalism | 4 |
| | Parallelism | - |
| | Efficiency | 1 |
| | Success | 1 |

Table 4. Teacher opinions regarding HRM functions.

| Variable | Participant opinions | N |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Functions for employees | Finding positions | 2 |
| | Training-development | 1 |
| | Rewarding | 1 |
| | Evaluation | 1 |
| | Employee safety and health | 1 |
| | Career planning | 1 |
| Functions for the organization | Making arrangements | 5 |
| | Establishing network | 2 |

opinions regarding the applicability of HRM functions, two themes as functions directed to employees and functions directed to the organization arise. The most recurring items from functions directed to employees are: finding positions (n=2), training and development (n=1), rewarding (n=1), evaluation (n=1), employee safety and health (n=1), career planning (n=1). The most recurring functions among those directed to the organization are: making arrangements within the organization (organizational culture, effective communication, job satisfaction, happiness, etc.) (n=5) and networking with the environment (n=2).

As an example, the following opinions can be presented: T1 "*Finding positions should be done by considering certain standards and it should be strictly evaluated*", T4 "*Finding the right people for the job, determining that the hired staff has necessary skills and positioning accordingly, protecting employee rights*" and T6 "*It should hire the person in accordance with organizational objectives and help with his/her professional or personal development.*" Many HRM variables are used together for organizational objectives. However, the important point here is to combine HRM functions that will create an advantage that will create a difference against other organizations (Akın and Erdost Çolak, 2012). The functions stated by the participants

were classified as either extrinsic or intrinsic rewards in another study. Similar to findings of the current study, other studies also found that extrinsic and intrinsic rewards have a positive impact on employees' performances (Ibrar and Khan, 2015; Mishra and Dixit, 2013).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Globalization, fast pace changes, structural changes in employees, change in the expected skills, acknowledging democratic management understanding, realizing the importance of productivity and implementing a dynamic structure that considers human factor in professional life are factors that form the basis of HRM. Additionally, it is seen that private schools give more importance to HRM to achieve its objectives. It is thought that private schools, with the duty of raising qualified individuals for society, adapt to this process of change to sustain their existence.

In today's conditions, traditional management has failed, and fundamental changes are implemented in educational policies and the contents of educational programs. The aim of human resources units in educational organizations is no different from the human resources units in other types of organizations. However,

the difference of educational organizations is the existence of teachers in continuous education and learning. Educators' use of new technologies to reach learners has become a mandatory practice. Without a doubt, private schools can adapt to these changes more easily with the help of the physical conditions and financial opportunities they have. Considering all these, it is crucial to investigate the HRM functions in educational organizations with a more critical eye (Saylan, 2013).

This study attempts to analyze the opinions of teachers working in a private school regarding whether there is a need for a human resources unit, what the functions of the human resources unit in their school are and how these functions should be practiced. All participants of the study agreed that the applicability of the human resources unit is an important issue. According to teachers' opinions, HRM functions develop the sense of belonging by increasing motivation, helping to pursue duties in parallelism and helping continuous learning by fostering teachers' professional development, hence, increasing the school's productivity via all these activities. Considering teachers' opinions regarding the applicability of HRM functions, it is revealed that these functions have both personal and institutional contributions.

HRM functions in organizations are categorized as functions directed to employees (training and development, planning, finding employees and selecting them, performance evaluation, social aid and security, rewarding, waging, employee safety and health, training) and functions directed to organizations (making relations with the environment, making arrangements within the organization). The HRM functions valid in a private school are similarly as functions directed to employees (supplying, selecting and positioning personnel, training and development, planning, evaluation, rewarding, employee safety and health, career planning and personal development) and functions directed to organizations (environmental relations and organizational development).

In order to successfully implement HRM functions in private schools, duties fall onto Ministry of Education (MoE) as a leading factor, followed by school administrators, teachers, policy-makers, parents, investigators, academics directed to planning, rewarding, performance evaluation, career planning, training-development, selection-appointing and waging. Opinions regarding what needs to be done in order to implement HRM functions in private schools also revealed the suggestions of the study.

According to this, the following suggestions were made: re-structuring the selection process in the selecting and appointing function in accordance with teachers who can adapt to rapid changes in technology, and believe in the continuous innovative philosophy, organizing in-service seminars to raise human resources practices awareness of employees regarding the education and development function, determining the HRM competencies of

administrators with important roles in the educational activities of the training and development function and improving these competencies, and establishing and managing a performance evaluation system that provides transparent and clear information to teachers in the performance evaluation function. For further studies at least two different methods, interview and observation may be applied to have triangulation in the study. Looking at an issue from different perspectives may result with changeling outcomes. This study only covered one private school. It is recommended to repeat this study on HRM practices of both public and private schools as a comparative study.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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