The Impact of Open Leadership in Being Learning Organisations for Professional Learning

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Abstract: The study examines the impact of being learning organisations in secondary schools culture in fostering professional learning and development. The study sheds a light of qualities of learning organisations to catch change and innovation in digital age. The study has qualitative nature which 26 headmasters become part of the research process voluntarily. The self-reports were employed during the process and thematic analysis was done. Research findings are revealed that headmasters still keep working within the frame of traditional management approach however they reflected that approaching learning organisations is crucial in fostering professional learning. Approaching open leadership and management can be crucial in being learning organisation. In further studies, perceptions and experience of parents, teachers can be examined and experimental studies can be done in detail.

1 INTRODUCTION

With the globalization, schools as organization attempt to implement innovation and entrepreneurship for continuous development. Having a continuous learning skill become significant in generating and using information in digital age (Aksal, 2015). According to Alipour and Karimi (2011), institutions and organizations should aim for internalizing the approach of using information and continuous learning to improve their performance. Learning was defined as an individual and organization being aware of what they know and what they do not for continuous improvement. Therefore, it can be highlighted the importance of the concept of learning. Thus, the studies revealed important suggestions for an individual continuously learning and being open to transformation and innovation (Smith, 2001).

Within the continuous learning process in school cultures, the concept of learning become crucial pattern as fundamental value and art of innovation in digital age. The qualities of learning organizations cover mental model, personal dominance, learning as a team, shared vision and thought of system. Active learning is also considered as a fundamental

value in information societies. Schools can only adapt to these changes if they turn into learning organizations (Jokić et al., 2012). In a modern educational setting, the source for the dynamics of a sustainable improvement for schools cannot be the directives of a central authority or the school administrators (Lyle, 2012). Betterment and continuous learning in schools require the importance of sharing and exchanging information.

Learning organization is an institution which has the ability to change behaviours in order to establish new information and understandings based on continuous learning cycle as information generation, acquisition and transfer. In this respect, approaching schools as learning organisation helps fostering professional learning and continuous improvement for headmasters, teachers, students and even families. Schools which approach learning organisation philosophy shed a light for future with their capacity to change, innovate and develop in digital age (Aksal, 2015).

Being open to innovations and understanding of learning with the all associated members of the schools become inevitable in increasing service quality and thus, bring the importance of being a learning organization. Similar to all institutions and fields, being a learning organization is also

important in educational institutions in terms of re-generating information and adapting to change. Especially in primary and secondary education schools where the roots of future are provided, being aware of the characteristics of learning organizations will lead to an increase in the motivation and willingness in the institutions that have the authority on innovation and dynamism needed (Yikici, et al., 2016).

Adapting to the change and importance of technology integration in education and internalizing innovation and re-structuring information is an inevitable part of organization's development and individual's personal and professional development. In this respect, this study aims to examine the role of being learning organisations for schools in fostering professional learning and development. As it is crucial to establish learning schools, learning together forms the basis for social welfare and development in order to increase the ability of our society to adapt the changes, innovation in digitalization. Therefore, the following research questions are answered to examine creating the willingness and motivation for headmasters, teachers and families in the process of organizational learning especially in primary and secondary educational institutions, where our future is formed. This emphasizes the existence of problem solving based on cooperation in overcoming any obstacle that affects educational and social development through sharing.

  a. How do headmasters perceive qualities of learning organisation for their professional learning as regards the open leadership strategies?
  b. To what extend do headmasters experience shared vision, collaboration, continuous learning process for professional learning?

2 METHODOLOGY

This study puts forward to examine qualities of learning which include generating information, spreading it through organizational basis, internalizing it, and using the information inline with technology integration. Significantly, this requires the awareness, environment, leadership, and empowerment of collaboration, learning processes for learning schools.

This study has qualitative nature which experiences and perceptions of headmasters, teachers, families are covered to reveal the significance of being learning organsations in fostering professional learning. In order to capture whole picture, re-interpretations of participants in research process are crucial in examining profession. The study is interpretive on description on practice and issue within a frame of social phenomena (Creswell, 2009, Denzin, Lincoln, 2003).

Case study is the research approach that in-depth individuals' experiences and perceptions are investigated in particular situation and activity (Creswell, 2009, Yin, 1994). Upon qualitative inductive process, self reports are employed in order to explore experiences and perceptions upon research focus (Miles, Huberman, 1994). Thematic analysis was done based on themes about qualities of learning organisations. The 26 headmasters become part of the research process. Back translation was done for the realiability and validity of the findings. The participants reported the impact of approaching learning organisations for professional learning of teachers, parents and themselves. Matrix strategy also help coding themes during the data analysis (Creswell, 2009; Denzin, Lincoln, 2003)

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The role and importance of technology in the global world as regards the fostering learning organization within school context for professional learning were emphasized. Although there have been many changes and improvements made in education and education management in specific, it is obvious that schools in developing countries has a long way to go in terms of secondary schools in becoming learning organizations and raising individuals who knows learning. Although it is attempted to establish a new vision, culture, school structure and strategy where the traditional educational management understanding is abandoned, goals and functions of schools are re-defined with participation of all its components. It is revealed that traditional approach, methods and habits are still existent in schools continue their existence solely as "teaching organizations".

3.1 Perceptions on Approaching Learning Organisations

As the pace of the changes in the world is increasing, it is essential to continuous learn new things in order not to fall behind of these changes.

That is because, people look for ways to access information to change and improve while changing. In this regard, institutions need to learn continuously in order to catch up with the new age and thus, develop the "learning organization" understanding.

The duties and responsibilities of the schools are changing nowadays. Most of the headmasters (N=23) perceived that traditional learning is still where meeting the societal demands and providing quality education service are effective transformation and quality in education. The development of information and technology along with the safety and use of information became important in the process of becoming a learning organization and part of the profession. Head masters reported that becoming learning organization generate information and have a flexible and open system that values strategies and steps taken to develop personally as well as institutionally professional learning. The five disciplinary processes of Smith (2001) are used as the theoretical framework of this study as headmasters reported in detail. These disciplines are personal mastery, mental models, establishing shared vision and learning as a team for acquiring professional learning.

The status of schools in exhibiting learning organization characteristics in terms of dialogue, sharing and team work, development, research and continuous learning are highlighted as qualities of learning organisations which are also necessary for professional learning within learning school dynamic.

3.2 Professional Learning of Headmasters in School Culture

Transformation and development in education depends on the development of individuals and institutions. Thus, it is very important to form learning individuals and organizations. Learning and information generation help educational institutions gain quality in establishing strong synergy and structure within a frame of life-long learning and continuous learning ability. Headmasters highlighted that creating a synergy at the end of the interaction, thinking and sharing is crucial. Headmasters highlighted that they aim to become more effective and productive with a synergic management and they aim to bring together various resources for success and efficiency. From this point, learning organization can be seen as part of a synergic management in organizations for the formation of professional learning. Learning Organization differs

from activity-based traditional organizations in terms of its problem solving-based nature. The concept of "learning organization" represents the organization as continuously renewing itself as a result of learning from its experiences, use this knowledge to adapt to changing environmental conditions and creating system for professional development of its staff. Headmasters expressed that the effort of gaining more information, flexibility and learning skills are significant in order to meet the growing needs of the new environment, expectations of teachers, parents in school culture (Yikici, et al., 2016).

The learning organization philosophy that is developed as a result of the transformation process increases the competitive power by creating organizational difference (Armstrong and Foley, 2003). Learning organization, as a process starting with individual learning continuing at group level and resulting in organizational learning, is the process of "generating information, gaining, sharing and using this information and new views in change". Organizations that effectively implement this process will gain great advantages where members can continuously improve their skills to gain desired results, practice creative thinking and learn together. In improving service quality, being open to innovations and understanding of learning within school culture are highlighted in this study.

4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Traditional institutions are trying to understand learning organizations and working hard to turn themselves into one of them in digital age. Transformation on leadership and management strategies put emphasis on open leadership strategies to foster learning and synergy in school culture (Altinay, et al., 2016). In this context, organization is taken to a new re-structuring step-by-step through innovation within organization, catching different points of view, using problem-solving methods for all problems, increasing quality when it does not meet the goal and establishing a shared vision (Smith, 2001). Healthy structuring of a learning organization depends on: organizational leaders wishing for a learning organization, responding to changes and developing new systems, gathering, evaluating and using of information. Continuously improving the capacity to build a future and establishing communication are significant value of

learning organizations (Srihawong and Srisa-Ard, 2012).

The qualities of learning organizations are highlighted upon findings as follows:

1. Those working in learning organizations are satisfied with their life motivation;

2. Learning organizations promise future for their members;

3. Learning organizations value creativity;

4. Learning organizations provide a reliable ground for individuals

Further to this, headmasters indicated that open leadership strategies need to be associated with a system to encourage continuous learning, creating new knowledge, management values the emotional intelligence and its importance in knowledge creation, the creativity and unconventional thinking, action learning to train staff in developing skills, policy to encourage the creation of learning communities, team learning (Akcil, et al., 2016).

As the process of establishing a learning organization involves three stages as forming learning individual; forming a learning team and forming a learning organization, learning how to learn at individual level starts with the pushing force of the increasing learning opportunities. Learning school is not where students create active "teaching" but it is where the activity of "learning" takes place. Learning school attempts to establish difference and re-structuring within the fundamental system it uses. There is no teacher and learner distinguished in learning schools. From the school director to the cleaner, to students and parents, everyone is a learner that open leadership policy may foster this learning process (Akcil, et al., 2016). Then, learning happens at individual, team and organizational levels. School succeeds in catching with change, renovating itself and being up-to-date through learning. Learning schools aims to establish learning discipline as well. This discipline is built on developing a shared vision and personal ability discipline however, shared vision and abilities are not adequate. Change does not happen on policies and practices but also in the thinking and interaction ways within school and the number of schools with this type of change is increasing (Smith, 2001). In digital age, the goal of education is to raise learning individuals and help individuals in learning how to learn. School as a learning organization is the one where students are in active "learning" activity is in the forefront than "teaching" (Gazi, 2016). For further studies, experimental research can be done to reveal experiences of headmasters. Perceptions and experience of parents, teachers can be examined

action plans and implementation can be done in schools for the future.

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