

# VIEWS OF TEACHER'S ON USAGE OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING MECHANISMS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Organizational learning mechanism is a critical component of increasing schools' organizational learning competence. The aim of this study is to determine level of usage organizational learning competencies in primary schools regarding to teacher's views. Research was carried out by survey method, in accordance with the subject and aims. The population of study consists of public and private primary school teachers working in central district of Konya province in 2011 – 2012 educational years. The study sample includes 640 public and private primary school teachers chosen with stratified sampling method. Data have been collected with demographic traits form and organizational learning mechanism scale developed by Schechter and adapted into Turkish by Unal. Collecting data was analyzed by using the packaged software. According to the research findings, perceptions of primary school teachers about organizational learning mechanism are "medium – level" in public school and "high – level" in private school. Public schools' success, also have increased when level of use of organizational learning mechanisms have been increased at the school. Teachers opinions' on use of organizational learning mechanisms at their school are analyzed with regarding to demographic traits. As a result, significant statistical differences are observed between teachers' opinions and number of teachers in school, working period together with principal.

**Key Words:** Organizational Learning Mechanism (OLM), School Success, School that learns

## INTRODUCTION

Idea of school learnability is one of the prominent subject in recent years. This is because; schools must be harmonized with their environment. They also behave proactively in order to get prepared new circumstances without changing environment. Learning school is an organization including learning process, strategy and structure that increasing the capacity of coping up with and reacting powerfully to alteration in a dynamic and uncertain environment (Schechter, 2008; Schechter & Atarchi 2013; Silins, Mulford & Zarrins, 2002; Silins, Zarins, & Mulford, 2002). Learning organization has actualized with organizational learning. Therefore; organizational learning is a critical component of effectuating school efficiency (Schechter & Atarchi 2014).

According to Schechter (2008), organizational learning expresses different meaning as dependent or independent variable. Organizational learning means strategy, process and activities that applied by organization on the purpose of encouraging learning as dependent variable and outcomes of learning processes as a independent variables. On the other hand, outcomes of learning processes state: a) changing of members' of organizations objectives, desired behaviors, tacit assumptions, and strategies related to mental models, b) changing of behavioral output operating organizational standards such as performance, habits and procedures.

Organizational learning can be examined two different dimensions, structural and cultural. Learning mechanisms constitute the side of structure and learning culture constitutes the side of cultural (Popper and Lipshitz, 1998, 2000; Schechter, 2008). This research is focused on the structural side of organizational learning, learning mechanisms.

As Popper and Lipshitz (1998, 2000), Organizational Learning Mechanisms (OLM) refer to structural and procedural arrangements allowing organizations to learn directly or indirectly. At the same time; OLM creates an environment that transferring individual learning to organizational knowledge or causing information exchange and acquisition of new information (Unal, 2014). From this respect, OLM helps explaining perceptibly how to learn organizations (Popper & Lipshitz, 1998, 2000). According to Schechter (2008) and Schechter and Qadach (2012), demonstrate the process concretely by defining five OLMs that work dynamic and cyclical.

<sup>1</sup>This paper is generated from the part of the Master thesis titled as "İlköğretim okullarında örgütsel öğrenme mekanizmalarının kullanılmasına ilişkin öğretmen görüşleri" which was supervised by Ali Unal at the Necmettin Erbakan University, 2015.

a. Information Acquisition: This includes experiential learning, vicarious learning, grafting, and searching and noticing environment.

b. Information Distribution: This expresses the process by which an organization shares information among its units and members.

c. Information Interpretation: A socio cognitive process that gives meaning to the distributed information. These sense-making activities share and develop interpretations. Organizational members decide whether incorporate the information into organizational routines or not.

d. Organizational memory: The processes and means by which organizational experiences are stored and coded into organizational memory for future use. These are both mental artifacts such as stories that represent organizational cultural pattern and values and structural –technological artifacts such as resource room, written policies, dress, furniture and operating procedures within an organization.

e. Retrieving information from memory for organizational use: Past encoded information is used to influence present decision making process.

In order to interacting other teachers in school, there is a need for learning mechanisms that provide dialog and collaborative structure to school (Kruse, 2003; Silins & Mulford, 2002). As a consequence, schools must be established OLMs for teachers to determine structures that help them sharing information and common thought constantly.

The aim of this study is to determine level of usage of organizational competencies in primary schools regarding to teacher's views and whether or not level of the usage of organizational learning mechanisms influence academic success of students. Based on this aim, following questions have been answered:

1. At which level do Primary schools (public – private) use organizational learning mechanisms according to its dimensions?

2. Do learning mechanisms that used in primary schools differentiate according to types of school (public or private)?

3. Does students' academic achievement differentiate according to level of organizational learning mechanisms used in school?

4. Does usage of organizational learning mechanisms in primary school differentiate according to numbers of teachers in school?

5. Does the level of organizational learning mechanisms differentiate according to working years of teachers with school headmaster?

## METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out by survey methods in accordance with the subject and aims. The populations of study consist of 10.713 primary school teachers who work at 206 public schools and 3471 primary school teachers who work at 18 private schools in central district of Konya province. The study sample is defined by using stratified sampling method. In order to stratify schools, achievement exam that is applied in 2011 by Konya provincial directorate of national education, results are used. According to this exam result, schools are put in order from the most successful to the most unsuccessful. Then, schools are divided into three group, successful, middle successful and low unsuccessful. In each layer, the most successful 25 public schools are chosen and study is carried out with them. The other hands, all of private schools in Konya province are involved in research. As a result, sample of this research consists of 640 public and private school teachers. Qualities of these teachers are shown Table - 1.

Demographic traits form which prepared for defining personal and occupational information about teachers whom participating survey and organizational learning mechanism scale developed by Schechter (2008) and adapted into Turkish by Unal (2014) are used as a measurement instrument. Organizational learning mechanisms scale includes four dimensions; analyzing information, storing-retrieving-putting use of information, receiving and disseminating information and seeking information, and 27 items that purposed to measure these dimensions.

Table 1  
Demographic traits of research sample

Demographic traits	Type of School	f	%
School Type	Public	480	75
	Private	160	25
Gender	Female	349	54,5
	Male	291	45,5
Working years	0-10 years	168	26,2
	11-18years	292	45,6
	19 + years	180	28,2
Education	Associate degree	46	7,2
	Undergraduate	533	83,3
	Master degree	61	9,3
Numbers of teachers at school	0-35	104	16,2
	36-75	420	65,6
	75 +	116	18,2
Working years with headmaster	1 year	283	44,2
	2-3 years	298	46,6
	4 years and over	59	9,2
<b>Total</b>		<b>640</b>	<b>100</b>

## RESULTS

First sub-problem is that “At which level do Primary schools (public – private) use organizational learning mechanisms according to its dimensions?”. For explaining this sub-problem’s values, Mean and standard deviation are figured out and results are shown in Table – 2.

Table 2  
Usage level of organizational learning mechanisms

Organizational learning mechanisms	Type of school	N	M	SS
Seeking Information	Public	480	2,94	,67
	Private	160	3,54	,46
Analyzing Information	Public	480	3,49	,97
	Private	160	4,29	,62
Receiving - Disseminating Information	Public	480	3,38	1,01
	Private	160	4,74	,78
Storing Information	Public	480	3,51	,86
	Private	160	4,40	,54

According to teachers worked in public schools; organizational learning mechanisms are used under the “medium – level” in receiving and disseminating information dimension and the other dimensions are used in “medium – level”.

According to teachers worked in private schools, organizational learning mechanisms are used in “medium – level” in receiving and disseminating information dimension and the other dimensions are used in “high – level”.

Second sub-problem seeks an answer that "Do learning mechanisms that used in primary schools differentiate according to types of school (public or private) ? The results of t test are shown Table -3 that weather the usage of organizational learning mechanisms differentiates or not, according to types of schools.

Table3  
Usage of Organizational Learning Mechanisms according to type of school

Organizational learning mechanisms	Type of school	N	M	SS	T	sd	P
Seeking Information	Public	480	14,71	3,35	10,59	638	,00
	Private	160	17,72	2,29			
Analyzing Information	Public	480	10,46	2,90	9,82	638	,00
	Private	160	12,86	1,85			
Receiving - Disseminating Information	Public	480	23,69	7,06	15,52	638	,00
	Private	160	33,18	5,48			
Storing Information	Public	480	42,18	10,35	12,14	638	,00
	Private	160	52,74	6,48			

Organizational learning mechanisms both used in public and private schools show statistically significant difference in all dimensions. Mean demonstrates that private schools are mostly used organizational learning mechanisms in all dimensions.

Third sub- problem seeks an answer "Does students' academic achievement differentiate according to level of organizational learning mechanisms used in school?" The results of Anova and LSD test are shown on Table – 4.

Table 4.  
Usage of Organizational Learning Mechanisms according to Students' Achievement Variable

Dimensions	Achievement*	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F	P	(LCD Test) Mean Difference*
Seeking Information	1	160	15,72	3,00			1-3
	2	160	14,88	3,21	19,30	,00	2-3
	3	160	13,50	3,45			
Analyzing Information	1	160	11,60	2,46			1-2
	2	160	10,42	2,59	26,72	,00	1-3
	3	160	9,35	3,16			2-3
Receiving – Disseminating Information	1	160	27,32	6,53			1-2
	2	160	23,29	6,38	45,41	,00	1-3
	3	160	20,45	6,54			2-3
Storing Information	1	160	47,46	9,14			1-2
	2	160	42,10	8,71	49,39	,00	1-3
	3	160	36,97	10,40			2-3

\*1.Successful, 2. middle successful, 3.low unsuccessful

According to the results of analysis, students' academic achievements differentiate related to the usage level of organizational learning mechanisms at school. Mean shows that schools the more use organizational learning mechanisms, the more their students being successful.

Fourth sub- problem is that "Does usage of organizational learning mechanisms in primary school differentiate according to numbers of teachers in school?" Anova test results to seek an answer this question are given Table – 5.

Table 5.  
Usage of Organizational Learning Mechanisms according to Numbers of Teachers Working at School

Dimensions	Teacher numbers*	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P	(LCD Test) Mean Difference*
Seeking Information	1	104	15,20	3,25	23,14	,00	1-3
	2	420	16,00	3,11			2-3
	3	116	13,69	3,79			
Analyzing Information	1	104	10,95	2,82	12,47	,00	1-3
	2	420	11,40	2,69			2-3
	3	116	9,93	3,26			
Receiving – Disseminating Information	1	104	24,64	7,12	21,99	,00	1-3
	2	420	27,43	7,70			2-3
	3	116	22,39	7,72			
Storing Information	1	104	44,28	9,66	24,31	,00	1-2
	2	420	46,53	9,81			1-3
	3	116	39,09	11,96			2-3

\*1.1-35 teachers, 2.36-75 teachers, 3.76 and over teachers

As an analysis result, usage of organizational learning mechanisms differentiate in all dimensions with regard to numbers of teachers working at school. All analysis results demonstrate that when numbers of teacher are over 76 at school, usage of organizational learning mechanisms is “the least” and when numbers of teachers are between 36 and 75; usage of organizational learning mechanisms is “the most”.

Fifth sub- problem is that "Does the level of organizational learning mechanisms differentiate according to working years of teachers with school headmaster?" Anova test results are shown Table – 6.

Table 6.  
Usage of organizational Learning mechanisms according to working years of teachers with school headmaster

Dimensions	Working years*	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P	(LCD Test) Mean Difference*
Seeking Information	1	283	15,57	3,52	,84	,430	
	2	298	15,29	3,37			--
	3	59	15,81	2,64			
Analyzing Information	1	283	11,28	2,88	4,32	,014	2-3
	2	298	10,73	2,96			
	3	59	11,71	2,08			
Receiving - Disseminating Information	1	283	26,71	8,13	10,66	,000	1-2
	2	298	24,78	7,72			1-3
	3	59	29,42	5,62			2-3
Storing Information	1	283	45,20	11,11	6,28	,002	1-3
	2	298	43,66	10,37			2-3
	3	59	48,81	7,52			

\*1.1 Year, 2.2-3 Years, 3. 4 and over Years

As a result of analysis, usage of organizational learning mechanisms at school has differentiated related to working years with headmaster for three dimensions except the dimension of storing information.

Means demonstrate that all dimensions of organizational learning mechanisms are mostly used when working years with headmaster are four years and over.

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

In this work which aims to reveal determination of utilization levels and effects on student's academic success of organizational learning mechanisms in primary schools, it has been showed that organizational learning mechanisms are being used "medium- level" in public schools and "high- level" in private schools. This result has similarity with research of Omur (2014) and Unal (2014). It is remarkable that both public and private school teachers have "the least" perception level on seeking information dimension.

According to Schechter (2008) seeking information dimension is an actively researching process of information. Schools are structured as more bureaucratic institutions and teachers are expected to adapt to existing rules instead of learning.

Seeking information is the basis of other dimensions; therefore, less activities in seeking information dimension also means decreasing the efficiencies of other dimensions.

Greater usage of organizational learning mechanisms for all dimensions in private schools shows that public schools structured as bureaucratic institutions and are expected to comply with the rules instead of making innovation or teachers perceive to comply with the rules as their duties.

Yumusak and Yildiz's findings (2011) are on the same direction. Omur's (2014) research result as high schools putting organizational learning mechanism to forefront more than vocational schools supports comment that private schools pay attention to academic achievement more than public schools.

Students have more academic achievement in public schools that using learning mechanisms than others point out the accuracy of the hypothesis about organizational learning and organizational learning mechanisms. This result is the expected situation.

In relation to use of organizational learning mechanisms, it has been ascertained that these mechanisms are used "the least" in schools having 76 or more teachers, "the most" in schools having 36-75 teachers. Omur's findings (2014) show the same results for high schools.

According to researches' results, it is possible to say that organizational learning mechanisms can be used in medium-sized schools effectively, however using in larger schools create problems. The reason for this situation might be increasing numbers of teachers in school making difficult to know each other and avoiding cooperation. When working time of teachers with headmaster is 4 years and over, organizational learning mechanisms are used mostly in schools. Increasing working hours of headmaster and teachers within school is expected to lead to trust each other and get to know each other better. Performance of headmaster has been evaluated in every-4-year-in-Turkey. After evaluation, successful headmaster can continue working the same school or be appointed to another school. According to the results obtained in this research, if headmaster who being evaluated as successful can continue in the same schools, the use of organizational learning mechanisms can be increased.

Based on findings, encouraging new knowledge seeking and implementing teachers, identification and reduction of bureaucratic practices in public schools, forming the schools with 36-75 teachers and ensuring headmaster work for longer than 4 years in the same schools proposals can be made

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