

Does Empowerment Effects the Quality of Work Life?

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Abstract

The Fourth Industrial Revolution and rapid developments in technology increase the need for improving the teaching-learning process and teacher performance. Research shows that empowerment has a significant and positive effect on teachers' organizational behavior.

Schools are living spaces where teachers spend most of their lives. As long as teachers' perceptions of the quality of work life are high, it is expected that the degree of achieving the goals of the school will be greater. In this article, it is evaluated how empowerment in their school affects their own work life quality according to teachers' perceptions. Quantitative design was used in this study. The data of this research were collected from 298 teachers determined by random sampling method working in the central districts of Denizli province during the 2020-2021 academic year. 235 (79%) of the teachers participating in the study were female and 63 (21%) were male. The Teacher Empowerment Scale developed by Hidiroğlu and Tanriögen (2020) was used to measure teachers' perceptions of empowerment. The Quality of Work Life Scale, which was adapted to Turkish and educational organizations by Akar and Üstüner (2017), was used in order to determine teachers' perceptions towards their work life quality. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict the quality of work life by using the "cooperation", "professional development", "trust" and "status" sub-dimensions of teacher empowerment. Teacher empowerment affects the quality of work life. Accordingly, "cooperation", "professional development", "trust" and "status" which are the dimensions of teacher empowerment predict the quality of work life positively and significantly. The predictive variables "collaboration", "professional development", "trust" and "status" dimensions explain 58% of the total variance of the predicted variable "quality of work life". However, according to the standardized regression coefficients (β), the order of importance of the predictor variables on "quality of work life" is "trust", "status", "collaboration" and "professional development". In this study, it is recommended to examine the "trust" and "status" dimensions, which were determined as the variables with the highest impact on "quality of work life", separately.

Keywords: Teacher Empowerment, Status, Trust, Cooperation, Teachers' Quality of Work Life, Professional Development

Introduction

Today, empowerment, which is one of the management techniques that allow employees to make their own decisions, has become a subject that needs to be emphasized (Gümüştekin & Emet, 2007, p: 90). Empowerment increases the organizational commitment of the employees, enables them to take responsibility, and helps them to sacrifice their individual interests to the interests of the organization. Empowered employees are more adaptable to changes (Lashley, 1995: 30). With empowerment practices, it is possible to ensure that the employee participates in organizational goals. In the realization of empowerment, there is a trust in the employees and it is ensured that they act with their common sense (Coleman, 1996: 31). If the leader does not trust his subordinates, empowerment cannot be created in that organization. Zimmerman (2000) emphasizes the importance of cooperation in order to improve the quality of life in their schools for the empowerment of teachers. Work life quality aims to meet the physical, mental, psychological and social expectations of employees (Küçükusta, 2007). The importance of the quality

of work life has emerged with the realization that an important element that determines the performance of the organization is the employees. Increasing the quality of work life to the highest levels is among the goals of many developing countries including Turkey, Argentina, South Africa. When the literature was reviewed, no study was found in Turkey or abroad that examines the empowerment of teachers and the effect of this situation on their quality of work life. In this respect, the findings of the study have original value. Accordingly, the problem that this research focuses on is based on the question of whether teacher empowerment affects teachers' quality of work life.

Literature Review

Empowerment is the process of increasing the decision-making authority of the employees in an organization and developing them through cooperation, sharing, educating, training and team working (Vogt & Murrell, 1990; Klagge, 1998). Improving teaching has become more imperative in 21st century society and therefore there is an urgent need to seek ways to improve teacher performance (Thomas, 2017). Empowered teachers are those who believe in and trust their knowledge, skills and abilities about their jobs (Ahmad et al., 2014; Blase and Blase 1994). Calibayan (2015) found that empowerment had a significant and positive effect on teachers' organizational behavior.

According to Short and Rinehart (1992) and Al-Yaseen & Al-Musaileem (2015), teacher empowerment dimensions include professional development, cooperation, trust, and status. Professional development refers to the perception that the school provides opportunities for teachers to develop professionally, continue learning, and improve their educational skills during their work at school (Short et al., 1994). Trust is particularly important because it is the key to voluntary cooperation and trust encourages behaviors that facilitate productive social interaction (Tyler, 2000; Lane & Bachman, 1998). Erawan (2008) explained the status by respecting the teaching role of teachers, being recognized by their peers, and being trusted the principal. Professional knowledge and experiences facilitate the transition of people to higher statuses

and provide them with prestige (Northcraft & Neale, 1994). Cooperation is when two or more teachers, or administrators and teachers, combine their powers, energies and knowledge to achieve a common goal. Cooperation between teachers is an important factor affecting the motivation of teachers at school (Argon, 2015).

According to Bragg and Andrews (1973), quality of work life indicates democracy in the workplace. According to Margolis and Kroes (1974), the quality of work life is defined as making changes in a way that leads to more humane and healthier working conditions and equal distribution in income sources. Newstrom and Davis (1997, 293) defined the quality of work life as everything that goes for and against employees in the workplace. The physical conditions of the workplace, the healthy working conditions of the school are in the field of work life quality. Emphasis is placed on improving the capacity of employees in the quality of work life and creating career opportunities. Hygiene factors such as promotion, employment, income, security opportunities of the employees are among the issues that the quality of work life gives importance. The development of employee capacity causes employees to be more motivated to their work (Bolduc, 2002).

It is considered very important to improve the quality of work life of teachers in the educational system (Yalçın et al., 2016, p: 205). It is seen that researches on the quality of work life in educational organizations have begun to be conducted (Erdem, 2008). Diener and Seligman (2004) state that happy employees will emerge in organizations which aim to protect the quality of work life of their employees.

Method

In this study, descriptive survey model was used and data were analyzed in quantitative design. Descriptive surveys are researches conducted in large groups, in which the opinions and attitudes of the people in the group about a phenomenon and event are taken, and the phenomenon and events are tried to be described (Karasar, 2012).

Participants

The population of the research consists of teachers working in the central districts of Denizli

province during the 2020-2021 academic year. In the study, 310 teachers selected by the “random sampling” method were reached, and the data of 298 teachers who answered the entire questionnaire were analyzed. 235 (79%) of the teachers participating in the study were female and 63 (21%) were male.

Data Collection

The Teacher Empowerment Scale developed by Hıdıroğlu and Tanrıoğen (2020) was used to measure the perceptions of teachers regarding the efforts of the school administration towards teacher empowerment. The dimensions of the Teacher Empowerment Scale, which consists of 37 items and 4 factors, are “professional development”, “trust”, “status” and “cooperation”. In this study, the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient was checked to determine the reliability of the Teacher Empowerment Scale and it was determined as 0.972. Measurements with a reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above are considered reliable (Büyüköztürk, 2018; Durmuş et al., 2016; Field, 2005; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Karagöz, 2016; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Therefore, the measurements are reliable and acceptable. The Quality of Work Life Scale developed by Van Laar, Edwards, and Easton (2007) and adapted to Turkish and educational organizations by Akar and Üstüner (2017) was used to measure teachers’ perceptions towards their own quality of work life. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the Quality of Work Life Scale and it was determined as 0.842. Therefore, the measurements can be considered reliable.

Data Collection

Data were collected online through Google forms during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Data Analysis

The answers given by the teachers to the questionnaire were coded into the SPSS 24 statistical package program and analyzed. In order to determine whether the distribution of the data shows a normal distribution, kurtosis and skewness values were examined and the data shown in the table below were obtained. Data regarding the normal distribution are

given in Table 1.

Table 1 Kurtosis and Skewness Values for the Teacher Empowerment Scale and the Work Life Quality Scale

Scales	Kurtosis	Skewness
Teacher Empowerment	-.325	.352
Work Life Quality	.363	-.338

A kurtosis value of ± 1.0 is considered excellent for most psychometric purposes, however, depending on specific applications, a value between ± 2.0 can also be considered a normal distribution in most cases (George & Mallery, 2012; Hair et al., 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). When Table 1 was examined, it was concluded that the scale data showed a normal distribution since it was between +1 and -1. Therefore, parametric tests were used in the analyses. In the significance tests, $\alpha = .05$ was taken as the significance value. In the study, multiple linear regression analysis was used to predict teachers’ perceptions in terms of both variables.

Findings

The research problem has been formed as follow: “Does teacher empowerment predict teachers’ work life quality?”. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test this problem and its model is given in Figure 1. The data obtained are given in Table 2.

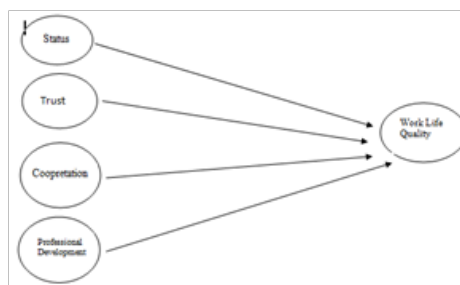


Figure 1 Multiple Linear Regression Model Showing the Effects of Teacher Empowerment Sub-dimensions on Quality of Work Life

Considering the relationships between independent variables in the model established for the sub-problem, there is no overly strong correlation ($r < 0.80$). If there are correlations of 0.80 and above between the independent variables, this

is an indication of the multicollinearity problem (Kalaycı, 2008; Berry et al., 1985). Therefore, there is no need to remove variables from the model. There is no multicollinearity problem in the model. When the Variance Inflation Index (VIF) values are examined, it is seen that the VIF values of the dependent and independent variables are below 3. According to Craney and Surlles (2002), if the VIF values of the variables are below 5, there is no multicollinearity problem. Mahalanobis, Cook's, and Leverage Values were examined to see if there were multiple outliers between the variables. The extreme value that should be looked at according to the Mahalanobis Distance value in the K2 table is 18,467 at the 0.01 significance level for 4-variable comparisons according to Degrees of freedom. In the study, four results outside the extreme value were found. In terms of Cook's Distance (.33) and Centered Leverage Values (.09), extreme values were not detected and deletion was not preferred.

Cook's distance and Central Leverage Values are required to be less than 1 (Cook & Sanford, 1982).

Since there is more than one variable in the model, the corrected R2 adjusted=.582 value is considered in interpreting the model. Since the significance level of the predictor variables was less than .05, the null hypothesis was rejected and it was accepted that there was a linear relationship between the variables. Since the unstandardized beta (B) coefficients of the predictor variables in Table 2 are positive, and the p coefficients are less than .05, it shows that there is a significant relationship between the predictive variables and the quality of work life, and it is understood that the hypothesis has been confirmed. At least one of the independent variables has an effect on the dependent variable. The coefficients (linearity) result was checked to understand which one. All independent variables have an effect on the dependent variable (p<.05).

Table 2 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Table of the Level of Teacher Empowerment Predicting the Quality of Work Life of Teachers

Predictive Variable	Predicted Variable (Work Life Quality)				
	B	Standard Error	β	t	p
Constant	,572	,157	-	3,641	,000
Cooperation	,141	,049	,174	2,886	,004
Professional Development	,101	,048	,113	2,120	,035
Trust	,282	,051	,371	5,542	,000
Status	,208	,036	,257	5,809	,000
R=.767R2=.588 R2 adjusted=.582					
F(4,293)=104.496 p=.000					

*p<.05

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict the quality of work life by using the variables of "cooperation", "professional development", "trust" and "status", sub-dimensions of teacher empowerment. As a result of the analysis, it was found that a significant regression model F(4,293)=104,496, p<.001, and 58% of the variance in the dependent variable (R2 adjusted=.582) were explained by the independent variables. Accordingly, "cooperation", "professional development", "trust" and "status" predict the quality of work life positively and significantly. $\beta=.17$, t (293)=2.88, p< .05, $pr^2=.03$.

A one-unit increase in the predictor variables causes a certain increase in the quality of work life. The amount of this increase, in order of dimensions, is as follows: a unit increase in the dimension of "cooperation" increases .141 units in the dimension of "work life", a unit increase in the dimension of "professional development" increases by .141 units in the dimension of "work life", "trust". A unit increase in the "quality of work life" causes an increase of .282 units, and a unit increase in the "status" dimension causes an increase of .208 units in the "quality of work life".

The predictor variables “cooperation”, “professional development”, “trust” and “status” explain 58% of the total variance of the predicted variable “quality of work life”.

When the standardized (β) regression coefficient and t values for significance are examined, the “collaboration” dimension ($\beta=174$; $t=2.2886$; $p<.05$) and the “professional development” dimension ($\beta=.113$; $t=.2.120$; $p<.05$), the “trust” dimension ($\beta=.371$; $t=5.542$; $p<.05$) the “status” dimension ($\beta=.257$; $t=5.809$; $p<.05$) on “Quality of work life” appears to be a significant predictor. However, according to the standardized regression coefficients (β), the order of importance of the predictor variables on “quality of work life” is “trust”, “status” “collaboration” and “professional development”. A one-unit increase in the predictive variables increases the quality of work life by .141 for the “collaboration” dimension, .101 for the “professional development” dimension, .282 for the “trust” dimension and .208 for the “status” dimension.

Work Life Quality = $.572 + .14x$ Cooperation + $.10x$ Professional Development + $.28x$ Trust + $.21x$ Status

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the findings, teacher empowerment affects the quality of work life. In order to increase the quality of work life, it focuses on developing the capacity of the employees and creating career opportunities. Bolduç (2002) also stated that improving employee capacity will motivate employees to work more. Research findings support this view. Considering that the individual or professional empowerment of teachers by school administrations and education systems will also help to increase their capacity, it can be said that this increase will also have an impact on their quality of work life. Walton (1975) also stated one of the dimensions of quality of work life as “opportunity to use and develop human capacity”. From this, it can be predicted that teachers’ belief that they are in an atmosphere where they can develop their capacities and meet their development needs will have a positive effect on their work life quality.

The order of importance of the predictor variables on “quality of work life” emerged as “trust”, “status”,

“collaboration” and “professional development” respectively. While Van Laar, Edwards and Easton (2007) emphasized the importance of employees having sufficient authority over their work and using initiative among the factors affecting the quality of work life, Erawan (2008) also related status with respect for the role of teaching, recognition of the teaching profession and the school principal’s trust in the teacher. According to the findings obtained in this study on the predictor of teacher empowerment’s quality of work life, the “status” sub-dimension of teacher empowerment is the second most important predictor of work-life quality after the “trust” sub-dimension. That is, the school administration’s valuing and trusting teachers and the fact that teachers feel their status at school is strengthened with the transfer of authority are seen as the most important factors affecting their quality of work life. It can be said without a doubt that the delegation of authority by their administrators, in-service trainings and in-service trainings will strengthen teachers and make them feel more competent and less stressed in achieving organizational expectations in working environment, thus increasing their quality of work life (Yalçın et al., 2016, p: 205). In addition, as a result of the analysis carried out, it was concluded that the trust in the manager and the quality of working life had a negative and significant effect on the intention to leave the organization (Pelit & Gökçe, 2019). Trust is particularly important because it is the key to voluntary cooperation and it encourages behaviors that facilitate productive social interaction (Tyler, 2000). Erdem (2010) stated that the quality of work life affects identification with the organization and that the improvement of the skills of the employees increases the respect of the employees towards their organizations.

Turan (2014) stated that improving the psychological empowerment levels of teachers increases the level of work life quality. It is seen that there is a positive and moderately significant relationship between the quality of work life and positive psychological capital levels (Demir, 2019). According to the literature and research results, it can be said that organizational conditions such as safe and healthy working conditions, development of employee capacity, democratic environment, and

organizational conditions related to work life quality are interrelated.

The increase in the cooperation dimension of teacher empowerment also affects the quality of work life linearly. Working conditions, which are one of the variables of cooperation and quality of work life, appear as two variables that are closely related to each other. According to Argon (2015), the most important teacher characteristics that affect teachers' emotional states in school is cooperation and sharing between teachers. It can be said that the sharing that the teachers will provide in cooperation with the school also affects the working conditions and thus the quality of work life. Akman & Akman (2017) also stated that the implementation of activities to improve social support in the work environment will increase the quality of work life. According to the research findings, professional development, which is a sub-dimension of teacher empowerment, affects the quality of work life. In a broader sense, teachers' perceptions that the school provides opportunities for their teachers to develop professionally, continue learning, and improve their educational skills during their work at school affect their perceptions of the quality of work life.

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