

The Role of Information Technology in Becoming Learning Organization

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Abstract: *Schools are like organizations to facilitate learning teaching experiences. In reaching out the transformation in education, it is essential to pursue the importance of information technology and communication. In gaining the merits of information technologies, schools are changing their structures to be a learning organization. In this respect, this research study focuses on the role of information technology in becoming a learning organization. Qualitative research was employed to understand the perceptions of teachers, school leaders in becoming learning organizations. Thematic analysis was conducted to analyse data. The results of the research study were revealed that collaboration, transparent management, team work are enhanced through information technology. Schools are becoming a learning organization that shows how they adapt transformation in education through information technology. This research study sheds a light the importance of information technology in the quality of education. It reports the use of information technology in schools context for the school culture. © 2016 The Authors. Published by Elsevier B.V. Peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of ICAFS 2016.*

Keywords: Information technology; learning organization; management; school culture; quality.

I. INTRODUCTION

The key term quality becomes questioning in the education. Change and development refer to consider the importance of educational systems in order to adapt the transformation. In this respect, reaching out quality rely on the measurement of underlying resources, satisfaction, human power and qualification in the education system for making developing cultures in school context. The study of 1 underlines the transformation as an inter- human activity for sustainable development in education. Incorporating preferred pedagogy for the education gives insights to focus on internalization in education programmes and development 2 . This helps to adopt transformation due to the role of information technology. The study of 3 gives insights on information technology in schools. It is reflected that this is cultural momentum that computers are in schools. Information technology facilitates openness and exchange of knowledge to school context. This requires the importance of sharing and collaboration within the school culture. In addition to this, 4 underlines that information technology becomes the indicator of effectiveness in schools. Integration of information technology to education makes a significant shift to consider leadership in school management process. In this respect, learning new technologies provides debate of becoming learning organization in schools. Therefore, transformation have started through the impact of information technology in schools that management have changed due to these reasons. Situational leadership plays a great role to adopt the merits of information technology and significance of the learning organization 5 . To be a digital leader in school management fosters the learning and sharing for school development and culture 6 . Learning organization refers learning continuously and transforming by themselves 7 . It is crucial to make schools to be a learning organization that the role of information technology provides sharing, openness and participative management in schools. Transfer of learning, sharing experiences through team spirit become essential to rewrap management structure of the schools 8 . As the culture of schools rely on vision, values, learning and using information technology needs to be culture of schools to adopt transformation. As the quality of education relies on following up changes and adopting for the development, focusing on systematic thinking, action school based projects, continuous reflective learning is essential for using the merits of information technology in becoming learning organization 9 . How schools can be a learning organization that schools need to pay attention on environmental scanning, shared goals, collaborative teaching and learning environments, initiatives and risk taking,

review and respect on the work of the school and good work for continuing professional development. It is significant to integrate information technology in facilitation in becoming a learning organization 10. Recent researches focus on the use of information technology in schools but they are partial 3,5 . There is an intensified need to evaluate the role of information technology in becoming learning organization. In this respect this research study aims to evaluate the performance of schools in becoming learning organization through the role of information technology. As information technology fosters change and development, it is significant to be a learning organization

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research design

An interview technique – one of the qualitative interview techniques – was used in this study. This technique can be classified as structured, semi-structured, and non- structured. For the semi-structured meeting questioned are prepared in advance and data collected 11. This procedure is not specific as in structured meetings nor is flexible as in non-structured meetings. It is in between the two and because it provides the flexibility, the researcher preferred to use this method.

2.2. The participants

In this study an objective sampling procedure was followed and the participants were formed through snowball sampling technique. With the assumption that most data could be collected from directors and teachers of rural schools, the sampling was expected to serve the aim12. The research was carried out in three primary schools in North Cyprus. Eight directors and twenty-three teachers formed the participants

2.3. Data collection procedure

The study was carried out between February 28th- April 18th. The participants were interviewed in their own offices when they were available. Each face-to-face interview lasted 40 minutes aiming at finding out about the features of the schools in the rural area.

2.4. Data collection methodology

Questions were set and put to three primary school directors and three teachers about the features of the schools in the rural area. Prior to the interview, the form was examined by three experts to confirm reliability. Some questions were either omitted or formulated again due to possible similarities in content. A pilot meeting was held with two directors and three teachers to confirm the clarity and the comprehensibility of the questions as well as the correct reflections of the questions and the given answers. The recorded answers were, then, noted in a form on the computer. The same documents were overviewed by two other experts for clarity, comprehensibility, suitability for the research question, and to make sure that the expected data would be provided. The two experts had a %91 agreement on the suitability and validity of the documents. Upon this, data collection procedure was started and the collected data was analyzed through content analysis under four stages.

2.5. Coding the data

The CD recordings were studied and the meeting documents were organized by numbering each line. The CDs and meeting documents were examined by an expert for any missing or incorrect parts. The data provided from the participants were put into meaningful parts and coded. The code list played a key factor in the examination and organization of the data. Then, all the procedure was read separately by the researchers for agreement or disagreement and necessary corrections were made. 13 reliability calculation was used the rate was found as %88. According to the two researchers, a %70 rate is accepted for the reliability of a study. The compromising codes were taken as the bases to reach the themes. 2.6. Finding the themes At this stage, the set codes were put in categories and the themes were specified. Four dimensions were made up to investigate the characteristics among the directors and teachers in schools in the rural areas and directors and teachers in schools. The participants' views were explained in a comprehensible way and presented to the reader. For the identification of the respondent, deep notes were used and every utterance by the respondent was put in inverted commas (“.....”) as in the following examples; Example 1 “.....” (T 1)

T: Teacher D: Director All the collected data was examined through a qualitative stage and interpreted. The results obtained were supported by literature.

III. FINDINGS

The following are the findings about the characteristics of directors and teachers in primary schools in the rural area.

3.1. Dimension I: Views about the suitability of the institution for cooperative learning in schools in rural areas To obtain information about the question above, eight directors and twenty-three teachers were questioned. (D.3) admitted saying, “ Our school is suitable for cooperative learning and we can share everything easily”. This statement explains the suitability of the environment for cooperative learning and there is a strong communication bond with which a cooperative learning comes out easily and effectively. “Because of clashes among teachers and the director’s weak authority to interfere, we don’t have a cooperative learning environment” complained (T.23). From this statement it is understood that the directors and teachers have different views on the subject matter. It is a common view that the teachers have serious clashes, every teachers thinks to be doing what seems right for him, there is not enough sharing and they have a heavy workload.

3.2. Dimension II: Views about fair administration in schools in rural areas A director (D. 5) emphasized, “ I’m always fair in administrative issues. It raises confidence among teachers and strengthens the culture of the institution”. It can be said that a fair and democratic behavior by the director raises confidence and supports team work. (T.8) stated, “ From the decisions the directors make, we can say that the administration is not fair”. Different views between the directors and teachers bring us to the conclusion that the directors are not fair and behave as they like in secrecy.

3.3. Dimension III: Views about teamwork in rural area schools A participant director (D. 9) explained the issue as, “We face some minor problems to do with teamwork. We need to improve it. This is possible with a strong culture and structure, more sharing, and a better communication”. (T. 9) supported the director’s view and added, “ We have problems in teamwork, because of different thoughts and views”. Both the directors and the teachers agree on the issue. Therefore, disagreements have become a chronic issue in which school directors cannot do much to help minimize or eradicate such disagreements.

3.4. Dimension IV: Improving student learning by quality products in schools in rural areas A director (D. 4) admitted, “Our means to help learning better are limited. This is mainly because of a centralist conception, a heavy syllabus, and the utmost focus on education only, as a result of which educational activities are not sufficient”. (T. 7) agreed saying, “The programme and syllabus affect learning negatively”. There are similarities in both the directors’ and teachers’ views about the issue. It is emphasized that there is a centralized education system, a heavy syllabus and ignorance of the realities to do with learner education.

IV. CONCLUSION

The school directors argue that the structure is quite suitable, there is a strong communication, the staff can easily share thoughts and a cooperative learning is always fulfilled. Teachers, on the other hand, argue that they have different views. There are clashes among teachers and each prefer working individually, there isn’t much sharing, and they don’t have time to cooperate because of heavy workload, Therefore, there isn’t a cooperative learning environment It is strongly recommended that cooperation should be improved with the help of technology and the syllabus should be overviewed. Based on the feedback from directors it can be said that school directors raise confidence in the workplace by behaving fairly and support teamwork. The teachers, on the other hand, insist on different views between teachers and directors in this regard. They add that the directors cannot be fair, they act around what decisions they make themselves in secrecy 8 . It is highly recommended that everybody should be given the opportunity to contribute to reasonable decision making process. Views both by the directors and the teachers show that they agree on teamwork issue. Due to grouping, opposite ideas become a chronic matter and leave the director in a hopeless position in forming group work. The recommendation is that to provide teamwork spirit sharing and responsibilities should be distributed fairly and reasonably. The participant directors and teachers shared parallel views on the question above. It is understood that educational realities are ignored due to a centralized system and the heavy syllabus. Thus, the education system should be separated from a centralist thought, the workload and syllabus should be lessened and the learners should be included in all sorts of educational activities rather than only education itself 5 .