

Perceptions of Elementary School Teachers Regarding Political Life at School

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ABSTRACT The basic purpose of this study was to determine political behavior in schools according to the perceptions of elementary school teachers and to present the political perceptions of teachers according to miscellaneous variables. The study was carried out using a survey model. The participants in the study consisted of 265 elementary school teachers, randomly selected from seven provinces in the seven geographical regions of Turkey. "A scale of political perception at school" developed by the researcher, was used as the data collection tool. It was determined that teachers from the more developed regions of Turkey, such as the Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean regions, perceived less political behavior than the teachers from regions considered to be less developed, such as the Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia Regions. The study also determined that married teachers and female teachers perceived more rational behavior than single teachers and male teachers, respectively. It was observed that teachers who were union members perceived more political behavior than those who were not union members.

INTRODUCTION

Although politics is originally a sociological concept, it is also one of the most frequently studied concepts in organizational theory and management science. As a significant aspect of organizational theory, politics is defined as a common environment where an interaction occurs between the individual and the group. The concept of organizational policy has been defined as softening workplace conditions and the corresponding influences and perceptions (Aronow 2004).

The concept of organizational politics is a rather complicated construct that is defined in different ways (Vigoda 2000). As a phenomenon, there is a certain level of internal political matter in every organization (Ferris and King 1991; Pfeffer 1992; Zhou and Ferris 1995). However, little is known about the nature and boundaries of such politics. There are two prominent approaches in the literature regarding the concept of organizational politics. The first one involves the utilization of tactics to exert influence over the employees. While the second is about how the employees perceive organizational politics (Vigoda 2000).

Interests are essential in determining the difference between political and non-political behavior (Drory and Romm 1990). If an individual behaves so as to serve his/her own interests, the behavior of that individual, from then on, is

said to be political (Frost 1987). Since inaction or acting in accordance with others or with a group is behavior which an individual may display to protect his/her own interests, such behavior is also considered to be political (Smit 1996).

There are two general perspectives about political behavior in educational institutions, which are referred to as macro-organizational and micro-organizational politics, and which are labeled with reference to similar concepts, such as power, influence, control, conflict, cooperation, strategy, agreement, discussion, interest groups, values, and ideologies (Ball 1987; Blase 1991; Marshall and Scribner 1991; Spring 1997; Barott and Galvin 1998). Macro-level politics point to country-wide and local general relations (Willower 1991). Micro-politics are concerned rather with the effect of macro-politics on the school and the internal political processes in the school (Iannaccone 1975; Ball 1987; Blase 1991; Bacharach and Mundell 1993; Barott and Galvin 1998). Micro-politics express the direct, ongoing, and dynamic relations of the individuals and groups among themselves and with each other.

In order to study political life in schools in detail, the political environment of the schools should also be revealed in detail. A significant amount of political behavior occurs in schools each day and such behavior is gradually increasing. School principals, teachers, and

students make numerous decisions every day which are based on political grounds. Generally, such decisions also take place around school administration (Judith and Lee 1974 cited in: Lucas 1987).

Many studies in the literature have focused on the political perceptions of employees (Vigoda and Cohen 2002). The perception of organizational politics has been studied along with its precursors and results (Vigoda 2000; O'Connor and Morrison 2001; Harris and Kacmar 2005; Treadway et al. 2005). Political behavior in an organization has been studied in terms of the effects of micro-politics on educational control (Blase and Blase 2002); the importance of power and culture in understanding educational leadership (Busher 2006); defining organizational politics (Drory and Romm 1990); determining the explicit and implicit control politics which occur in schools and the role of teachers in this process (Eden 2001); examples of political behavior in organizations (Farrell and Peterson 1982); the perception of political behavior in organizational life (Ferris and Kacmar 1992); determining the precursors and results of perception in organizational politics (Parker et al. 1995) the effect of politics on the decision making process in an organization (Pettigrew 1973); defining power and politics in an organization and the effects of politics on the organization (Pfeffer 1992); determining the political perception of school administrators (Tooms et al. 2007); the effects of organizational politics and political tactics on organizational life (Vigoda and Cohen 2002); and the effect of politics and power on organizational life (Zaleznik 1970).

The issue of power struggles among organization members and organizational internal politics is one of the least discussed topics in Turkey (Kocel 2005). A literature review established that some studies have been carried out recently in Turkey about the perception of organizational politics in the industrial sector (Caliskan 2006 ; Gurel 2006; Islamoglu and Boru 2007; Mohan-Bursali 2008; Buluc 2009). However, the literature review also revealed that no studies had been performed in educational organizations in Turkey to determine political behavior in schools or the political perceptions of education professionals.

The main purpose of this study was to determine the political behavior experienced in schools according to the perceptions of

elementary school teachers and to reveal the political perceptions of teachers in relation to various variables.

The following research questions were posed with reference to the schools in which the participating elementary school teachers work: 1) What is the perceived level of political behavior? 2) Which type of political behavior is perceived most? 3) Do perceptions of political behavior differ significantly depending on the gender, marital status, occupational seniority, education level and settled location of the teacher, throughout the scale as a whole and in all of its sub-dimensions? 4) Do perceptions of political behavior differ significantly in relation to the size of the school, the region the school is located in and the status of the school in the province (provincial center/county town/village), throughout the scale as a whole and in all of its sub-dimensions?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Model

This study was carried out using a survey model in order to determine the political perceptions of elementary school teachers about the schools where they work.

Participants

The participants in the study consisted of 265 elementary school teachers, randomly selected from seven provinces in the seven geographical regions of Turkey. The distribution of the teachers, in terms of province, was as follows: 33 from Bursa, 41 from Corum, 33 from Diyarbakir, 36 from Mersin, 42 from Kars, 37 from Kutahya and 43 from Trabzon.

Data Collection Tool

"A scale of political perception at school", developed by the researcher, was used as the data collection tool in the study. Initially, the researcher established a draft scale in the light of the scales and studies accessed during the literature review (Kacmar and Ferris 1991; Zhou and Ferris 1995; Kacmar and Carlson 1994; O'Connor and Morrison 2001; Gurel 2006; Islamoglu and Boru 2007; Mohan-Bursali 2008). Validity and reliability operations were carried

out throughout the scale and on the subscales of the “scale of political perception at schools”, which was developed based on the data obtained from the experimental group of 352 people. Exploratory factor analysis was employed in order to determine structure validities throughout the scale and in its subscales.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) coefficient and Bartlett Sphericity test results were evaluated during the pre-implementation phase and these values were found to be statistically significant (KMO=0.93; Bartlett Sphericity test $\chi^2=21704.760$; $df=364$; $p<.001$). These obtained values show that the data is appropriate for factor analysis.

There were 11 items in the “False Pretense” subdimension of this five-factor-structured scale. It was observed that the factor loads of the items in this dimension varied between .74 and .47 and that the items in this dimension accounted for 5.39% of the total variance of the scale. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient for this subdimension of the scale was .89. The second dimension of the scale, the “Displaying Rational Behavior” subdimension, contained a total of 12 items and the factor load values of the items in this dimension varied between .41 and .75. The items in this dimension accounted for 4.05% of the scale’s variance. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient for this subdimension of the scale was .78. The 15 items that were included in the “Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy” dimension accounted for 6.77% of the scale’s total variance and the factor load values of the items in this dimension varied between .48 and .78. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient for this subdimension of the scale was .94. The 7 items contained in the “Rules and Procedures” subdimension accounted for 2.70% of the total variance and the factor load values of the items in this dimension varied between .47 and .70. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient for this subdimension of the scale was .87. There were 27 items in the “Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior” subdimension and the factor load values of the items in this dimension varied between .78 and .46. The 27 items contained in this dimension accounted for 34.56% of the scale’s total variance. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient for this subdimension of the scale was .96. The 72 items contained in “A scale of political perception at school”

accounted for 53.49% of the total variance. The Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency coefficient for the whole scale was .97. All these values show that all subdimensions of the Political Perception Scale and the scale in general have a valid and reliable structure.

Data Analysis

In the study, the teachers’ perceptions about organizational politics were determined using frequency, standard deviation and arithmetic mean values. Whether the teachers’ perceived political behaviors varied depending on personal variables was determined by employing ANOVA, t-test, Mann-Whitney-U test, Kruskal Wallis-H test, and Tukey tests.

RESULTS

In this section, the findings are presented respectively, in accordance with the sub-objectives of the study.

Findings Regarding the Teachers’ Political Perceptions about School Life

When Table 1 is analyzed, it is observed that the following statements are the most widely adopted: “You have to have friends in higher places for the school administration to comply with your requests,” in the “False Pretense” dimension; “The reason should also be stated when requesting something from the school principal,” in the “Displaying Rational Behavior” dimension; “In order to request something from the school administration, it is necessary to be on good terms with them,” in the “Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy” dimension; “The school employees attend the activities organized by the school administration and other high level administrators without objection,” in the “Rules and Procedures dimension,” and “The ones attending school activities willingly get a more tolerant treatment,” in the “Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior” dimension.

Findings Regarding Whether the Teachers’ Political Perceptions Differ Depending on Personal Variables

In this section the analysis of the teachers’ political perceptions is provided in terms of personal variables.

Table 1: The most widely adopted statements for each dimension of the scale

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Statement in the scale</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>
<i>False Pretense</i>	You have to have friends in higher places for the school administration to comply with your requests.	2.91	1.34
	You can get what you want if you have friends in high places.	2.84	1.44
	Teachers that are more vocal about matters manage their jobs better than the other teachers.	2.75	1.31
<i>Displaying Rational Behavior</i>	When requesting something from the school principal, a reason should also be given.	3.74	1.24
	The school principal should be persuaded in rational ways.	3.65	1.18
	It is necessary to find rational reasons in order to make the school administration agree with an idea.	3.64	1.21
<i>Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy</i>	In order to request something from the school administration, it is necessary to be on good terms with them.	2.62	1.21
	Requests from the senior teachers of the school receive approval more quickly.	2.37	1.22
	It is necessary to obtain the support of upper administration in order to make the school administration agree with something.	2.24	1.15
<i>Rules and Procedures</i>	The school employees attend the activities organized by the school administration and other upper administrators without objection.	2.81	1.32
	Rules and procedures are a means to prevent change.	2.76	1.29
	If the school administration says “no” to you, they will immediately point to the regulations.	2.71	1.31
<i>Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior</i>	The ones that attend school activities willingly receive more tolerant treatment.	3.00	1.19
	Teachers treat the parents that provide benefits to the school better.	2.75	1.31
	Power is used frequently in order to be more effective.	2.72	1.36

As seen in Table 2, the teachers’ political perceptions about school life differ significantly depending on their region of employment [$F_{(6-258)}=48.16$; $p<.01$]. When the average points for the teachers’ political perception scale in general was examined, the order from the highest to the lowest was found to be as follows: Central Anatolia ($\bar{X}=216.04$), Eastern Anatolia ($\bar{X}=199.33$), Black Sea ($\bar{X}=192.58$), Southeastern Anatolia ($\bar{X}=192.15$), Mediterranean ($\bar{X}=175.00$), Aegean ($\bar{X}=130.27$) and Marmara ($\bar{X}=102.35$).

According to the results of the Tukey test, which was carried out to find the source of difference in terms of regions, it was observed that the following groups of teachers perceived more political behavior in the schools where they were employed: teachers in the Mediterranean, Aegean, Eastern Anatolia, Black Sea, Southeastern Anatolia and Central Anatolia Regions compared to teachers employed in Marmara region; teachers in the Mediterranean and Black Sea Regions compared to teachers employed in the Central Anatolia Region; teachers in the Central Anatolia and Black Sea Regions compared to teachers employed in the Southeastern Anatolia Region; and teachers in the Southeastern Anatolia, Mediterranean and Eastern Anatolia Regions compared to teachers employed in Aegean Region.

As, also, seen in Table 2, the teachers’ political perceptions did not differ significantly in the “Displaying Rational Behavior” [$F_{(2-256)}=0.51$; $p>.05$] and “Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior” [$F_{(2-256)}=2.38$; $p>.05$] subdimensions.

As seen in Table 3, the teachers’ political perceptions differ significantly depending on the location where they are employed: [$F_{(2-259)}=2.78$; $p>.05$] for the scale as a whole; [$F_{(2-25)}=2.39$; $p>.05$] for the “False Pretense” subdimension; [$F_{(2-259)}=1.88$; $p>.05$] for the “Displaying Rational Behavior” subdimension; [$F_{(2-259)}=1.37$; $p>.05$] for the “Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy” subdimension; and [$F_{(2-259)}=0.65$; $p>.05$] for the “Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior” subdimension.

As is also seen in the table, the teachers’ perceptions about political life at school do not differ significantly depending on the location in which they are employed for the “Rules and Procedures” subdimension [$F_{(2-259)}=6.67$; $p<.05$]. According to the results of the Tukey test, which was carried out to determine the source of difference, it was revealed that teachers employed in a village or town perceived more political behavior than teachers employed in provincial centers and county towns.

Table 2: One dimensional variance analysis results for whether the teachers' political perceptions differ depending on the region of employment

<i>Region</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Significant difference (Tukey)</i>
1. Marmara	33	102.39	27.49	6-258	48.16	.000	1-2; 1-3;
2. Central Anatolia	41	216.04	29.51				1-4; 1-5;
3. SE Anatolia	33	192.15	44.98				1-6; 1-7;
4. Mediterranean	36	175.00	47.37				2-4; 2-6;
5. Eastern Anatolia	42	199.33	29.66				3-2; 3-6;
6. Aegean	37	130.27	27.05				4-6; 5-6
7. Black Sea	43	192.58	38.12				
Total	265	174.90	51.15				

Table 3: One dimensional variance analysis results for whether the teachers' political perceptions differ depending on the school location

<i>Scale</i>	<i>School location</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Significant difference (Tukey)</i>
<i>Scale</i>	1. Provincial Center	119	177.94	48.28	2-259	2.78	.06	-
	2. County Town	64	162.10	60.34				
	3. Village	79	180.94	46.09				
	Total	262	174.99	51.21				
<i>False Pretense</i>	1. Provincial Center	119	64.77	22.67	2-259	2.39	.09	-
	2. County Town	64	58.12	25.52				
	3. Village	79	66.29	23.15				
	Total	262	63.60	23.66				
<i>Displaying Rational Behavior</i>	1. Provincial Center	119	33.65	11.69	2-259	1.88	.15	-
	2. County Town	64	30.04	13.32				
	3. Village	79	32.83	11.70				
	Total	262	32.52	12.15				
<i>Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy</i>	1. Provincial Center	119	27.90	9.635	2-259	1.37	.25	-
	2. County Town	64	25.50	10.69				
	3. Village	79	27.87	10.13				
	Total	262	27.30	10.06				
<i>Rules and Procedures</i>	1. Provincial Center	119	33.68	8.40	2-259	6.67	.00	-
	2. County Town	64	31.60	9.70				
	3. Village	79	36.72	7.47				
	Total	262	34.09	8.66				
<i>Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior</i>	1. Provincial Center	119	17.92	5.48	2-259	0.65	.52	-
	2. County Town	64	16.87	7.61				
	3. Village	79	17.22	6.24				
	Total	262	17.45	6.28				

Table 4: t-test Results for whether the teachers' political perceptions differ depending on their gender

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Scale</i>	Male	136	169.66	46.93	260	1.72	.08
	Female	126	180.59	55.35			
<i>False Pretense</i>	Male	136	60.82	21.42	260	2.03	.04
	Female	126	66.84	26.36			
<i>Displaying Rational Behavior</i>	Male	136	30.84	11.02	260	2.02	.04
	Female	126	33.92	13.47			
<i>Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy</i>	Male	136	26.94	10.04	260	0.73	.46
	Female	126	27.86	10.24			
<i>Rules and Procedures</i>	Male	136	33.97	8.35	260	0.30	.76
	Female	126	34.30	9.15			
<i>Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior</i>	Male	136	17.07	5.95	260	0.73	.46
	Female	126	17.65	6.86			

Table 5: t-test Results for whether the teachers' political perceptions differ depending on their marital status

Scale	Marital status	N	Mean	Sd	Df	t	p
Scale	Married	173	179.49	52.62	258	1.81	.07
	Single	87	167.42	46.47			
False Pretense	Married	173	65.94	24.49	258	2.11	.03
	Single	87	59.42	21.16			
Displaying Rational Behavior	Married	173	32.55	12.45	258	0.06	.95
	Single	87	32.65	11.59			
Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy	Married	173	28.64	10.14	258	2.92	.00
	Single	87	24.83	9.43			
Rules and Procedures	Married	173	34.56	8.44	258	0.88	.37
	Single	87	33.56	8.83			
Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior	Married	173	17.78	6.42	258	1.02	.30
	Single	87	16.94	5.93			

Table 6: Mann-Whitney U test results for whether the teachers' political perceptions differ depending on their educational level

Scale	Educational level	N	Row Avg.	Row total	U	p
Scale	Bachelor's degree	203	126.61	29119.50	2554.50	.00
	Postgraduate	53	169.59	5596.50		
False Pretense	Bachelor's degree	230	127.86	29408.50	2843.50	.02
	Postgraduate	33	160.83	5307.50		
Displaying Rational Behavior	Bachelor's degree	230	125.82	28938.00	2373.00	.00
	Postgraduate	33	175.09	5778.00		
Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy	Bachelor's degree	230	127.37	29296.00	2731.00	.00
	Postgraduate	33	164.24	5420.00		
Rules and Procedures	Bachelor's degree	203	128.61	29581.00	3016.00	.05
	Postgraduate	53	155.61	5135.00		
Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior	Bachelor's degree	203	128.90	29647.00	3082.00	.08
	Postgraduate	53	153.61	5069.00		

Table 7: t-test results for whether the teachers' political perceptions differ depending on their union membership status

Scale	Union membership	N	Mean	Sd	Df	t	p
Scale	Yes	137	182.49	50.98	261	2.68	.00
	No	126	165.76	50.00			
False Pretense	Yes	137	67.01	23.28	261	2.64	.00
	No	126	59.38	23.37			
Displaying Rational Behavior	Yes	137	33.79	12.05	261	1.94	.05
	No	126	30.90	12.03			
Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy	Yes	137	29.27	9.99	261	3.47	.00
	No	126	25.04	9.70			
Rules and Procedures	Yes	137	34.21	8.18	261	0.30	.75
	No	126	33.88	9.21			
Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior	Yes	137	18.19	6.45	261	2.14	.03
	No	126	16.53	6.03			

As seen in Table 4, the teachers' political perception levels do not differ significantly depending on their gender: for the scale in general [$t_{(260)}=1.72$; $p>.05$]; in the "Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy" dimension [$t_{(260)}=0.73$; $p>.05$]; in the "Rules and Procedures" dimension [$t_{(260)}=0.30$; $p>.05$]; and in the "Appeasing and

Two-faced Behavior" dimension [$t_{(260)}=0.73$; $p>.05$].

However, the teachers' political perceptions differ significantly depending on their gender in the "False Pretense" dimension [$t_{(260)}=2.03$; $p<.05$] and in the "Displaying Rational Behavior" dimension [$t_{(260)}=2.02$; $p<.05$]. When the

Table 8: One dimensional variance analysis results for whether the teachers' political perceptions differ depending on their occupational seniority

Scale	Seniority	N	Mean	Sd	Df	F	p	Significant difference (Tukey)
Scale	1. 0-5	85	168.18	50.50	2-235	1.39	.24	-
	2. 6-10	90	180.12	49.89				
	3. 11 and more	63	179.79	57.29				
	Total	238	175.77	52.24				
False Pretense	1. 0-5	85	61.17	24.37	2-235	1.36	.25	-
	2. 6-10	90	66.23	22.25				
	3. 11 and more	63	67.03	26.78				
	Total	238	64.63	24.31				
Displaying Rational Behavior	1. 0-5	85	32.42	12.34	2-235	.03	.96	-
	2. 6-10	90	32.36	11.49				
	3. 11 and more	63	32.88	13.59				
	Total	238	32.52	12.33				
Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy	1. 0-5	85	25.30	9.13	2-235	3.37	.03	1-2
	2. 6-10	90	29.27	10.67				
	3. 11 and more	63	27.90	10.87				
	Total	238	27.49	10.31				
Rules and Procedures	1. 0-5	85	32.61	8.41	2-235	1.24	.28	-
	2. 6-10	90	34.70	9.02				
	3. 11 and more	63	34.06	9.30				
	Total	238	33.78	8.89				
Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior	1. 0-5	85	16.67	6.29	2-235	.71	.48	-
	2. 6-10	90	17.54	6.66				
	3. 11 and more	63	17.90	6.76				
	Total	238	17.32	6.55				

averages for both dimensions were compared, it was observed that female teachers perceived more political behavior than male teachers.

It can be seen in Table 5, the teachers' political perceptions differ significantly in relation to their marital status in the "False Pretense" dimension [$t_{(258)}=2.11$; $p<.05$] and the "Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy" dimension [$t_{(258)}=2.92$; $p<.01$]. When the averages for both dimensions were compared, it was observed that married teachers perceived more political behavior than single teachers.

On the other hand, the teachers' political perception level did not differ significantly depending on their marital status for the scale in general [$t_{(258)}=1.81$; $p>.05$]; in the "Displaying Rational Behaviors" dimension [$t_{(258)}=0.06$; $p>.05$]; in the "Rules and Procedures" dimension [$t_{(258)}=0.88$; $p>.05$]; and in the "Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior" dimension [$t_{(258)}=1.02$; $p>.05$].

According to Table 6, the teachers' political perceptions differ significantly depending on their educational levels for the scale in general [$U=2554.50$; $p<.05$]; in the "False Pretense" dimension [$U=2843.50$; $p<.01$]; the "Displaying

Rational Behavior" dimension [$U=2373.00$; $p<.05$]; and the "Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy" dimension [$U=2731.00$; $p<.05$]. When the row averages were examined, it was determined that postgraduate teachers perceived more political behavior than teachers with a Bachelor's degree in each of these three subdimensions and for the scale in general. On the other hand, the teachers' political perceptions do not differ significantly depending on their educational levels in the "Rules and Procedures" dimension [$U=3016.00$; $p>.05$] and in the "Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior" dimension [$U=3082.00$; $p>.05$].

Table 7 reveals that the teachers' political perceptions differ significantly depending on their union membership status for the scale in general [$t_{(261)}=2.68$; $p<.05$]; in the "False Pretense" dimension [$t_{(261)}=2.64$; $p<.01$]; in the "Displaying Rational Behavior" dimension [$t_{(261)}=1.94$; $p<.05$]; in the "Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy" dimension [$t_{(261)}=3.47$; $p<.01$]; and in the "Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior" dimension [$t_{(261)}=2.14$; $p<.05$]. When the averages were compared, it was observed that teachers with union memberships perceived more political

behavior than teachers who were not union members in each of these three subdimensions and for the scale in general.

However, the teachers' political perceptions differ significantly depending on their union membership status in the "Rules and Procedures" dimension [$t_{(261)}=0.30$; $p>.05$].

It is obvious in Table 8 that the teachers' political perceptions differ significantly depending on their occupational seniority in the "Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy" [$F_{(2-235)}=3.37$; $p<.05$] dimension. According to the results of the Tukey test, which was carried out to find the source of the differences, it was observed that teachers with 6 to 10 years of occupational seniority perceived more political behavior than those with 0 to 5 years of occupational seniority.

As is also seen in Table 8, the teachers' political perceptions do not differ significantly depending on their occupational seniority for the scale in general [$F_{(2-235)}=1.39$; $p>.05$]; in the "False Pretense" dimension [$F_{(2-235)}=1.36$; $p>.05$]; in the "Displaying Rational Behavior" dimension [$F_{(2-235)}=0.037$; $p>.05$]; in the "Rules and Procedures" dimension [$F_{(2-235)}=1.248$; $p>.05$]; and in the "Appeasing and Two-faced Behavior" dimension [$F_{(2-235)}=0.71$; $p>.05$].

DISCUSSION

With regard to the political behavior that the teachers encounter most often at the school in which they are employed, in this study it was determined that the teachers had to have friends in higher administration for the school administrators to meet their demands, and that they had to attend activities organized by the school administration regularly and willingly without any objection. In the studies performed, it was determined that the most frequently encountered micro-political behavior in educational institutions was the use of tactics to influence the decision making processes and behavior designed to control individual interests within a group. On the other hand, macro-political behavior yielded problems related to the schools' objectives in practice (Kirp 1977 cited in: Vigoda 2000); equality problems regarding the leaders (Oriz 1982; Napiar and Willower 1991; Shakeshaft et al. 1991; Reihl and Byrd 1997; Fraynd and Capper 2000 cited in: Vigoda 2002); accountability within the school system and

related problems (Zemelman et al. 1998; Guský and Baily 2001; Brimelow 2003 cited in: Vigoda 2002); and problems stemming from the abuse of power by school administrations and its use as a means to oppress (Waite and Allen 2003 cited in: Vigoda 2002; Cokluk and Yilmaz 2010; Yilmaz and Altinkurt 2011; Altinkurt and Yilmaz 2012; Balci et al. 2012).

In the study performed by Tooms et al. (2007) to determine the political perceptions of school administrators, the school administrators considered political behavior at schools as a necessity and they stated that the climate of today's public schools were also rather political.

The fact that elementary school teachers' perceptions of political behavior were found to be at medium level in Turkey is a situation that can be turned into an advantage if the political behavior in schools is managed well. The results of the study carried out by Caliskan (2006) in the manufacturing industry also support this claim. In the study performed by Caliskan (2006) with 204 employees, a positive relationship was found between the perception of organizational fairness and mild political behavior. This result shows that employees who reach their objectives through mild tactics have an elevated perception of fairness. It was also observed in the same study that mild political behavior that partially or completely achieves its objectives caused a significant increase in employee job satisfaction.

In previously performed studies, it was observed that elementary schools in Turkey were managed bureaucratically. In a study performed by Buluc (2009), the bureaucratic school structure, formality and centrality of the elementary schools in the experimental group were found to be at medium level. However, some studies have found that a low level of bureaucracy was perceived at schools. For instance, in a study performed by Omeroglu (2006) with 374 elementary school teachers, the teachers' perception of bureaucracy in the schools at which they were employed was found to be at low levels.

It was observed in this study that married teachers and female teachers perceived more rational behavior than single teachers and male teachers, respectively. It was also observed that female teachers perceived more political behavior in the "False Pretense" dimension than male teachers and that married teachers perceived more political behavior in the "Establishing

Coalition and Hierarchy” dimension than single teachers. This situation can be interpreted as a result of the married and female teachers having encountered political behavior at school more often. In a study carried out by Vigoda and Cohen (2002), female employees and employees with a low educational level were found to perceive more political behavior in the workplace than male employees and employees with a high educational level. Studies by Ferris and Kacmar (1992) and Ferris et al. (1996) also produced results that support these findings. In a study performed by Tooms et al. (2007), female school administrators were observed to adopt political behavior for occupational development more than male administrators did.

In this study, it was determined that teachers with a postgraduate education perceived more political behavior in the “False Pretense”, “Displaying Rational Behavior”, and “Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy” dimensions than teachers with a Bachelor’s degree. These findings support the results of a study carried out by Gurel (2006), which established that there was a meaningful relationship between the educational level of employees working in the production industry and the persuasion and negotiation dimensions of political behavior. Accordingly, the higher the educational levels of the employees the more likely it was that they would employ the method of persuasion, one of the political tactics.

It was observed in this study that teachers with 6 to 10 years of occupational seniority perceived more political behavior in the “Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy” dimension than teachers with 1 to 5 years of occupational seniority. The findings of a study performed by Tooms et al. (2007) are supported by the findings of this study. It was also observed in the study by Tooms et al. (2007), which was undertaken in order to determine the organizational political perceptions of school administrators, that school administrators with 10 years or more occupational seniority perceived more political behavior. The result of these two studies is that the greater the employees’ seniority at schools, the higher their perception rate of political behavior.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that the political behavior teachers face most often at

the school where they are employed are having friends in higher administration for the school administrators to meet their demands, and that having to attend activities organized by the school administration regularly and willingly without any objection. The study also indicated that married teachers and female teachers perceived more rational behavior than single teachers and male teachers, respectively. According to the result of the study, female teachers perceived more political behavior in the “False Pretense” dimension than male teachers and that married teachers perceived more political behavior in the “Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy” dimension than single teachers. The study revealed that teachers with a postgraduate education perceived more political behavior in the “False Pretense”, “Displaying Rational Behavior”, and “Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy” dimensions than teachers with a Bachelor’s degree. It was also concluded that teachers with 6 to 10 years of occupational seniority perceived more political behavior in the “Establishing Coalition and Hierarchy” dimension than teachers with 1 to 5 years of occupational seniority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, the following suggestions are proposed:

1. In the study, the teachers stated that the most widely encountered political behavior was behavior related to having friends in upper administration and behavior related to being on good terms with the school administration. Since these types of behavior will harm the organizational culture in the long term, precautions should be taken in order to establish an organizational culture based on merit and trust.
2. In order to prevent negative and unethical political behavior in schools, assurance must be given that codes of ethics will be complied with.
3. The political perception issue, which is a very new topic for educational institutions, should be examined from the perspectives of both teachers and administrators, in new studies with different samples. The issue of political perception in educational institutions should be studied using

structural fairness models, and variables such as organizational change, values, work satisfaction, organizational fairness, and organizational identity.

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