

Components of Commitment to the Teaching Profession

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Received: July 28, 2017

Accepted: September 27, 2017

Online Published: October 1, 2017

doi: 10.23918/ijsses.v4i2sip115

Abstract: Commitment to the profession is a very significant to carry the organizations from current levels to the higher ones. In terms of education, it can be said that the educators to be considered as committed are the ones who have commitment to their educational institutions, teaching activities, teaching profession and workgroup colleagues. This paper tries to shed a light upon the different types of commitment and their contributions to the education.

Keywords: Professional and Occupational Commitment, Committed Educator, Organizational Commitment, Internalization, Dedication

1. Teaching Profession

Literally speaking, teaching is the profession run, operated or held by the teachers; work of teachers etc. Technically speaking, teaching is a process in which the ideas or principles are taught by an authority which means a teacher or an institution. Putting the technical definition into the center, it is necessarily supposed to say that teaching is a process which is processed through a system. As Balacheff (2000), if any system has an educational function, then it is compulsorily required to set an interaction between the components of that system and it must not be handled as alone. Discussing this claim, it can be said that if there is a system, then there are also components. In terms of education and teaching, our components, in narrow perspective, are educational institution with the policy, teacher and learner. Each of the components may function alone, but they, as a whole, will contribute to the definition of teaching.

However, the international organizations put the teachers into the central position in terms of teaching profession. Within this context, representatives of UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF, UNDP and ED -last names given respectively- Bokova, Lake, Ryder, Clark and Leeuwen (2014) released a Joint Message on the occasion of the World Teachers' Day (on 5 October 2014) that "an education system is only as good as its teachers. Teachers are essential to universal and quality education for all: they are central to shaping the minds and attitudes of the coming generations to deal with new global challenges and opportunities. Innovative, inclusive and results-focused teaching is crucial and ... we are to provide the best possible opportunities for millions of children, youth and adults worldwide." These representatives strongly put emphasis on the importance of teaching profession, teachers and education. As expressed in the end of

quotation, it is the duty of the nations to provide the education for their citizens, because as mentioned by UNESCO, “the right to education has been internationally recognized as an overarching right: it is a human right in itself and is indispensable for the exercise of other human rights. A number of international standard setting instruments protect the fundamental human right to education, and pay special attention to the teaching profession (UNESCO, 2015, p. 4).

However, the quote also strongly suggests the importance of inevitable role of teachers for the teaching profession. What makes an education system good is based on the teachers, since they play an essential role and have a place in the very core of education process. In other words, now that the education is a human right; and now that education is a system, then the implementers in this system of education have a very significant place, since they are the ones who will shape the generations, children, youth and adults.

2. What is Commitment?

In the literature, there are many definitions regarding the commitment. In terms of education, we will deal with the definitions related with the education and teaching. Yildiz and Celik (2017) discussed that education is process in which there are components; and the pyramid shows how these components are processed.

- a) a system of organization with formal and normal expectations;
- b) an individual to implement the expectations of the organization;
- c) attitudes beyond the regular and basic expectations of the educational organization



Celep (2000) makes a similar definition of commitment by expressing that it is to become committed to do more than the ordinary and standard expectations of an organizational entity. Meyer and Allen (1997, p. 12) adds one more characteristic to this definition by putting emphasis on the interest-free, emotional connection with the organization.

Some other scholars like Altun (2017) and Mart (2013) link the commitment to the passion. However, their approach is not far from the approaches given above, because technically they also suggest that any education implementer is the one who does the requirements, but not satisfied with that, passes beyond the expectations given on the paperwork of an educational organization. Yildiz and Celik (2017) comment that talking about any committed education implementer, it means that any educator has physical and mental readiness to do more than expected, because of their passion to their profession and the students. They already have a motivating power in their spirit to seek for more and to act for more and this motivating power is derived from passion, willingness, zeal and enthusiasm dedicated to the profession and learners.

3. Types of Commitment

As a motivating power for the educators, commitment to the profession or teachers' commitment can be handled in various categories. As said above by Yildiz and Celik (2017), the education is system with its components, and while we are evaluating the commitment of any education implementer, we are supposed to discuss the connection of the educator, located in the very center of education in terms of teaching, with the other components of the educational organization: institution, policy or the expectation of the institution, learner and the educator himself or herself. Within this context, we will try to discuss the commitment of any education implementer in accordance with the connection to the several other components in the education system.

Celep et al. (2000) suggests that there are four significant commitment types including commitment to the organization that stands for educational institution, teacher groups at the school, teaching profession and the activities/tasks held by the educators.

3.1 Commitment to the Educational Institution

Commitment to the school is the feeling of commitment dedicated to the school for favor of school itself, apart from the regulations and policies to be followed. In other words, according to Balay (2000), the relationship between the teacher, administrator and the school is more than just following the targets of the institution; the relationship is not mechanical but also emotional.

Glickman (1993) suggests that commitment to the educational institution is to identification of any educator himself or herself with the school; to feel as a part of the school and loyalty to the school. However, Celep et al. (2004) states that there are some factors affecting the commitment level or sustainability of the educators to the school. These factors can be listed as follows:

- Interaction among the teachers,
- Communication between the teacher and educator,
- The characteristics of the works held by the teacher at the school,
- The attitudes of the school administration towards the teacher,

Additionally, we can include the following items

- Attitudes of families,
- the resources that can be reached by the educator,
- School's physical and social atmosphere etc.

Mowday et al. (1982) express that institutional commitment is one of the reasons for the institutional efficiency. Moreover, according to Celep et al. (2004) the educator equipped with the feeling of commitment is highly concerned with the future of the school, because such a teacher identifies himself or herself with the school and its goals and educator's attitude is more than the general or ordinary expectations of the institution.

According to Wallace (1995), the transcendental desires of teachers to advance the organization is one of the results of the high level of dedication and commitment to the organization. Similarly, O'Reilly & Chatman (1986) talk about psychological connection of a person with the organization because the results

of commitment change according to one person's basis of connection and according to Kelman (1958), this connection exists in three bases of connection, as quoted by Caldwell et al. (1990): these attachments or connections are

- 1- Compliance of the person with the organizational policies and expectations;
- 2- Identification of the individual with the organization, having full affiliation with the organization;
- 3- Internalization that means the harmony between the individual and the organization.

Commenting on the suggestion by Caldwell et al. it can be inferred that the educator should be physically and mentally ready to follow the expectations of the organizations by working in full harmony with the organization and carrying this harmony and compliance into an affiliation. Namely, personal connection becomes a dedication and commitment.

Likewise, Huber (1999) mentions that committed teachers have very powerful connections with the educational institution in which they are employed and their dedication will yield to many abundance for the school, students and their own professions.

3.2 Commitment to the Actions in Teachings

Commitment to teaching is very important for the academic success of both school and teacher and learners. Yildiz and Celik (2017) suggest that as one might aspect, the result of the commitment and dedication of a teacher not only affects the teacher and his or her students, but the institution is also influenced by such an enterprise. However, what makes a person or teacher committed is very important. In this sense, the characteristics of commitment to the occupation can be given as follows:

- The job becomes a mark of self-esteem and respect (Balay, 2000);
- The job is located in the center of daily life (Balay, 2000);
- The level of internalization of one's with the job being dealt with;
- The level of paying attention to the activity being performed;
- The situation of preparations for the activities;
- Psychological and physical readiness to take the necessary actions;
- Sustainable level of motivation;
- Seeking for more;
- Active participation in the tasks;

Lodahl and Kejner (1965) say that committed individuals reflect their dedication and passions to the things they are dealing with and while doing this, their attitude is to do that thing with high care by

internalizing them within themselves. In other words, the thing to be dealt with is not done just because of necessity, it is done because the individual feels it an internal must for himself or herself.

However, as said above (Celep et al, 2004), some factors will definitely affect the level of commitment. Within this context, the institutions are supposed to adjust the mechanism of reward and punishment very tenderly. Also, there is another striking point alleged by Ince and Gul (2005), commitment to the job is not the satisfaction of performance and job; in other words, commitment or dedication does not necessarily mean ultimate success. However, such a commitment will make emphasis on the success of the individual to some degree.

3.3 Commitment to Teaching Profession

Technically speaking, commitment to teaching is of the necessary dedication to the profession of teaching. The teachers are in the very core of the occupation of teaching. Professional or occupational commitment has been described in the literature with various definitions.

According to Nguyen, Mai and Nguyen (2014) individuals the professional and occupational committed to their professions are equipped with “three-component model of organizational commitment: normative commitment, continuance commitment, affective commitment [which] are three constructs of organizational commitment” (p.7). As seen, they assert that the persons are supposed to follow some certain norms, that we can call occupational norms or policy or organizational expectations; their commitment do not stop, they are always full of energy and finally they are emotionally in the profession they are holding.

Similarly, Celep (2000) talks about the importance of occupational dedication and commitment. He claims that any teacher with the alleged commitment will most probably have a good student-teacher communication, because such educators, in the very beginning of education system, are consent with the requisites of their profession, so they will provide whatever is required for pre-while and post activities.

Theoretically speaking, commitment will result in doing all the requirements of the teaching profession; this is supposed to result in the target behavior or target success. However, as said above, the yields of education are subject to changes and based on many other elements apart from the educators whose role is unquestionably very significant.

3.4 Commitment to the Work Group

Group commitment is to internalize one’s self with the other members of any group sharing the same goal and expectations and to feel loyalty for these members. In this sense, the status of participation in the group activities is very important in terms of setting up a tough communication with the group members, and beyond that to feel loyalty or possession in the group.

Mueller, Wallace and Price (1992) suggest that commitment to the office mates is very important in terms of overcoming many obstacles to be faced while working, because the individual will not feel alone and they will be ready to take responsibilities more easily comparing to those who do not feel themselves as a part of a workgroup. However, this is a theory in which interdependence is highly appreciated by putting emphasis on its significance. On the other hand, it is quite true that such solidarity is paramount to some

degree, but again, it does not necessarily mean that the success or target result will automatically come as expected.

Some other scholars like Balay (2000) treat this situation from educational perspective. According to his opinion, teachers' and administrators' devotion to the colleagues working in the same setting will highly contribute to their dedication and commitment to the profession and educational institution in which they work. In this sense, it is very paramount to set up atmospheres in which teachers can work in solidarity and interdependence. To illustrate this, it can be talked about *Private Turkish Schools* in more than 170 countries in the world and operated by the Gulen Movement sympathizers. The motto of the teachers and administrators of these schools is *hizmet* which means *service*. As can be understood from the literal meaning of word *service*, they have gathered around an ideology of dedicating themselves to the service of humanity in terms of peace and tolerance (Celik, Kirk & Alan, 2017).

A teacher from these schools providing such an atmosphere of interdependence, Mrs. Aydan Meydan from Bosna Sema School won the "Inspiring Educator Award" given in the final competition of Google Science Fair 2015 in Mountain View in California in the United States of America (Sarajevotimes, 2015).

Tsui et al. (1992) mention that devotion or commitment to the workgroup friends has some individual and organizational consequences. The feeling of possession to a group positively affects the performance of the individuals by contributing to their problem-solving issues in the work.

In other way of saying, socialization is very important to be successful, because thanks to social participation, the feeling of solidarity will be reinforced. Naturally, such enhanced interdependence will positively contribute to the organizational goals of the institution. This necessarily puts a light upon the importance of commitment to the workgroup friends (Bishop et al. 2000).

However, there are some factors affecting the commitment of an educator in an educational institution. As quoted by Celep (2000), these elements are work design, self-determination, decision-making processes, feedback, co-operation, educational opportunities and sources. Additionally, it can be talked about attitudes of the administration, reward and punishment mechanism etc.

4. Conclusion

Commitment to the profession is highly important in terms of building a successful organizational system. Putting the teaching into the center as a profession, we can say that committed teachers are much more successful, and they can set up an interaction among their students, organizations, professions, themselves and workgroup colleagues.

In terms of occupational commitment, it can be said that dedication to the organization, devotion to the teaching issues and commitment to the profession are the key concepts. Thus, the organizations are supposed to try hard to set up suitable settings for their educators.

Organizations will survive with their staffs following the regulations, only the organizations with committed personnels will go further. Likewise, teaching is not just an occupation but a passion for the educators with commitment.

It should be remembered that commitment does not necessarily mean the success, but it is a key to success and the target behavior in terms of education.

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