

Primary School Teachers' Views on Intergenerational Learning

Soner Polat^a

Kocaeli University

Ender Kazak^b

Kocaeli University

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the views of primary school teachers on intergenerational learning (IGL). The study group consists of eight primary schools in the central district of Düzce during the 2013-2014 academic year and 13 teachers who teach in these schools. Participants were selected among teachers working in Düzce's city center by using the criterion sampling method, one of the purposive sampling methods. Phenomenological design, a qualitative research design, was used in the study. The data was collected by the researcher through semi-structured interview questions that were developed through pre-interviews conducted with the teachers alongside research into the literature. According to the research findings, IGL is not a conscious, effective, or consistent situation among teachers from different generations. Members of younger and older generations were determined to not be eager enough to learn from each other in order to improve themselves. Inquiry-based learning and observational learning were more preferred as intergenerational learning methods among teachers from different generations. While the younger generations of teachers assist the older ones more with technological issues; the older generations of teachers convey their experiences in classroom management to the younger ones. The most important obstacle preventing intergenerational learning between teachers from different generations is lack of communication.

Keywords: Intergenerational learning • Younger generation • Older generation • Primary school teacher

a Assoc. Prof. Soner Polat (PhD), Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Education, Kocaeli University, Kocaeli 41380 Turkey
Email: spolat@kocaeli.edu.tr

b **Corresponding author**

Ender Kazak (PhD Candidate), Institute of Social Sciences, Kocaeli University, Kocaeli 41380 Turkey
Research areas: Organizational justice; Organizational image; Inspection and generations at school
Email: enderkazak81@hotmail.com

Increasingly longer life spans, a new social fact in today's societies, focus attention on intergenerational harmony and the need for cooperation between generations. With this lengthening of the ageing process, the role of the elderly within an organization has become increasingly important and leading to intergenerational connections and relations gaining importance (Krašovec & Kump, 2010). Throughout history, intergenerational learning has in fact taken place in various environments such as at work, in the family, at events, rituals, and so forth. Older people have always passed their knowledge on to the young. Nowadays, the intergenerational approach is not just the traditional approach, a one-way knowledge transfer from older people to the young. The rapid growth of novelties and new problems calls for the approach of cooperation between generations and cooperative learning (Ličen, 2010).

According to its estimates from 2004, the United Nations Organization declared that the average life expectancy will be 73.8 in 2010 and 81 in 2050 (Andersen, 2008). When population dynamics all over the world are investigated, the general population growth rate is seen to be declining and our world has entered into the demographic ageing process at an increasing rate. In Turkey, the elderly population constitutes a social aspect which cannot be ignored anymore. This change in demographics affective not only in this country but also all over the world, changes the society from a "young society" into an "old society" (Hotar, 2012). Despite these developments, society has a recent tendency to exclude the elderly. They are considered incompetent and denied their responsibilities. This is far removed from previous societies in which, given their experience, the eldest members had enjoyed a much higher status (Hernandez & Gonzalez, 2008). Nowadays, the fact that people live longer prompts governments and organizations to create a future in which old people are respected and significantly involved in social life (Seedsman, 2007). In accordance with the Republic of Turkey's Law 5510, the retirement age is 58 for women and 60 for men until 2035. But in the years that follow, the retirement age will gradually increase. As of today, the qualifying age for a pension in most OECD countries is 65 (Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu [Social Security Institution], 2007). When teachers' years of experience are generally examined through age distribution in Turkey, 0 to 10 years experience corresponds to 52% of teachers; 11 to 20 years experience is 27% of teachers; 21 to 30 years is 13%; and over 31 years of experience corresponds to 8% of all teachers. According to the age distribution of

teachers, 35.6% of them are under the age of 30, 33% of them are between 33 and 39 years old, 22.9% of them are between 40 and 49 years old, and 8.5% of them are over 50 years old (Dinçer, 2014). These indicators show that teachers between 20 and 50 years old from different generations work together by interacting with each other in schools, and the age gap between newly appointed teachers and those who qualify for a pension is gradually increasing.

Most of the issues confronted at workplaces where people from different age groups work together are based on generational differences of perception, method, practice, and communication (Keleş, 2011). Research has indicated that different generations exhibit different learning styles, different manners of work, and different value priorities. These differences may result in intergenerational conflicts that compromise organizational performance at times. Organizations must therefore seek to reconcile differences in the workplace and utilize this individual and organizational advantage of diversity by educating and developing employees. They must try to create new organizational cultures that value and optimize generational diversity (Igloo, 2008).

Much research has indicated that inexperienced teachers with only three years experience are less efficient than senior teachers, and the effects of experience emerge after 5 years. The relationship between seniority and efficiency in a teacher is not a linear relationship, though. Probable causes of this are thought to be that relatively older teachers are not always open to improvement or learning and are tired of their jobs (İlğan, 2013). Despite the expressions of novelty and change which have been mentioned in recent years, traditional education methods are still seen to be preferred by teachers, and they have not completely adopted new methods in middle schools (Akpınar & Gezer, 2010). Likewise, Çandar and Şahin (2013) determined in their study that teachers have difficulty applying the constructivist program, and providing information exchange between teachers with the help of the constructivist approach can be one of the ways to enable teaching. Şahin and Arcağök (2014) performed research to determine the lifelong-learning competence levels of teachers. They determined that the sub-dimensions of obtaining information and digital competences significantly differ from each other in accordance with the variable of professional seniority, and teachers with the lowest competence level in these dimensions are found to be those with 31 or more years of seniority. At this point, IGL reveals that less-experienced teachers with lower seniority levels and experienced

senior teachers are both in need of learning from each other and sharing their experiences. As well as contributing to the progress and efficiency of the teacher, intergenerational learning's ultimate goal is to provide learning and development to the student. It is thought that with the help of IGL, personal knowledge and experiences can turn into organizational knowledge and application, and this contributes to the organizational learning process and state of being a learning organization. In the literature, there have been very few studies (Novotný & Brücknerová, 2014, for example) about implementing IGL among teachers in schools. But, there have been studies in the literature assessing educational programs aimed at IGL between younger generations (children and university students) and older generations (adults). This study affirmatively discusses the age-related differences of teachers from different generations in schools; its intention is to point out the many learning subjects and experiences which teachers from different generations can learn from each other by means of intergenerational learning. It is thought that with the help of such a study, if teachers provide awareness on the subject through the conceptualization and institutionalization of IGL, intergenerational learning activities may effectively result.

Definition of Intergenerational Learning

On one hand, the notion of generation refers to family positions and relationships, thus marking phases of the course of life in terms of being a child, parent, or grandparent. On the other hand, the notion of generation encapsulates a broader socio-economic outlook as an age-based form of social identification that is structured around people's shared experiences and understandings, as well as the specific social and political events that have occurred throughout the course of their lives. Whereas family-based generations are subject to transition more easily, generational (cohort) groups undergo lasting but less solid transitions (Field, 2013). Generational cohort theory considers that generations are similarly located in time and as such have experienced similar historical events which in turn form world-views peculiar to that group. In other words, generational cohort theory posits that people growing up at the same time have similar life experiences, which in turn shape their behavior, attitudes, values, and opinions. According to this theory, different aspects of age and experience influence an employee's attitudes and behaviors in certain ways (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998, as cited in Ropes, 2013).

Psychologically speaking, learning is a process that leads to behavioral change and the acquisition of new skills and reactions, in addition to the natural development of an individual through growth and development (Yee, 2008). Alongside the traditional exchange of knowledge and experience within families, this learning is now spreading into a broader social environment (Krašovec & Kump, 2010). The whole of learning occurs in a farther, wider process than formal education, so formal education is not the only way to learn; each type of education (non-formal, formal, and informal) does not necessarily result in learning (Torres, 2003). Learning can occur at different times and places. One of these types of learning is intergenerational learning.

IGL is defined as an interactive process that takes place between different generations resulting in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values (Ropes, 2013). It is an interactive process in which people from different generations exchange their knowledge and skills through useful activities for the purpose of contributing to the establishment of communities whose members from different generations are more cohesive (Wermundsen, 2007). IGL is one form of lifelong learning involving the transfer of tacit knowledge across generations. This form of learning is informal, mostly unplanned and self-directed. It is situational and experiential learning through personal conversations and activities (Cherri Ho, 2010). IGL can be said to be a form of learning that provides an exchange of knowledge and experience with the aim of mutual enrichment between different generations (Cabanillas, 2011). Intergenerational learning may come into being not only on its own, but also with planning.

Intergenerational education and learning programs are defined as planned activities that intentionally link various generations with the goal of exchanging their experiences and achieving mutual benefits (Krašovec & Kump, 2010). The term "intergenerational education programs" refers to organized and planned educational activities that bring together different generations with a gap of at least two generations between them. Such activities enrich all participants, increase mutual understanding, and help build a more cohesive, close-knit community (Ličen, 2010). All intergenerational programs require an educational purpose. In order for intergenerational relations to change and improve, attendants need to learn new things from various aspects (Mannion, 2012). The goal of intergenerational learning is to ensure intergenerational communication with intentional, reciprocally beneficial activities

that encourage understanding and respect between generations as well as contribute to more cohesive communities. Intergenerational cooperation and education may result in the emergence of strong relations between generations at various levels (Krašovec & Kump, 2010).

Benefits of Intergenerational Learning in Organizations

IGL is a process that has been developed for centuries within a familial framework. In the last century, the family paradigm suffered significant changes and intergenerational learning become more and more a social process developed within practice communities and organizational frameworks. In many countries, especially in Europe, intergenerational learning becomes a useful tool for increasing knowledge retention when old workers retire, or as a result of the entropy driven processes in the fields of organizational knowledge (Brătianu & Orzea, 2012).

The possibilities and forms of intergenerational learning in organizations can be divided into two categories. The first one involves a hierarchical yet benevolent learning form between an experienced and an inexperienced person, as in the cases of mentoring, apprenticeship, and guidance; the second category includes a non-hierarchical learning form for mutual exchange, support, cooperative problem-solving, and learning (Igloo, 2008). In the IGL of young people, adults, and older adults, mentorship signifies one of the roles of an expert who leads, guides, advises, and provides training to others. Within an international group, a mentor appears as an individual's advisor, helping the individual with personal growth, learning, and training, while at the same time contributing to the development, creativity, and work of the group as a whole (Govekar-Okoliš, 2010). In schools, the notion of IGL recalls such terms as peer observation, peer coaching, peer consultancy, and peer supervision. The point that distinguishes these terms from mentorship is that in mentorship, more-experienced teachers contribute to the professional development of less-experienced teachers, whereas in other terms, teachers with equal levels of experience help each other and share in their professional development (Bozak, Yıldırım, & Demirtaş, 2011). Another distinctive point between IGL and mentorship is that in IGL there is a discernment based on one's age and generation, the differences of age and seniority are too much; in mentorship, meanwhile, a teacher with several

years experience may consult a less senior teacher. In other words, while the gap between the age and seniority of teachers is big in IGL; it can be much less in mentorship.

In the workplace, IGL is a basic way of especially providing younger generations with training and improvement. Successful IGL gives elders an opportunity to learn based on the assumption that older generations can be motivated to share their knowledge, skills, and competences with younger generations. IGL has immediate and long-term positive effects. IGL is acquired by both older and younger generations. It has a complementary and sharing nature. Its benefits for older learners include protecting older generations' health and freedom, contributing to their needs in the workplace (Danish Technological Institute [DTI], 2012). Additionally, it shows gratification for their contribution to the community and a deeper understanding of younger generations. For younger learners, it provides skill-development, confidence, a level of training over time, and employment (DTI, 2012). It increases self-esteem and self-confidence, and provides a deeper understanding of older adults. It provides both generations with the feeling of being valued, accepted, and respected; enhancing knowledge and skills; and acquiring a meaningful, trusting intergenerational relationship (Newman & Hatton-Yeo, 2008). According to Bengtson and Murray (1993 as cited in Boström, 2003), interactions between individuals of different generations play a significant role in strengthening the relationships between younger and older generations, improving their ability to rely on each other. Consequently, IGL is thought to be beneficial to both the organization and individual when applied within an organization (Ropes, 2013). IGL can be an opportunity and tool for contributing to teachers' learning and improvement. As a consequence, it contributes to the cognitive and effective development of a student. However, there is no academic data on methods of application or levels of intergenerational learning in schools. Therefore, it is important to determine in the light of teachers' views and experiences what IGL means for teachers, how IGL practices work in school, and which methods are used in the process. Considering the fact that there are many learning subjects and experiences which can be mutually shared by teachers from different generations, this study will try to determine how teachers from different generations behave as far as updating and improving their knowledge, which methods they use, and which obstacles they face in this process.

The Purpose of the Study

This study is a qualitative research whose purpose is to determine primary school teacher's views on intergenerational learning. Qualitative researchers seek answers to questions that emphasize how a social experience is created and how its meaning is explained (Kuş, 2003). From this point of view, answers are sought for the following questions in the study:

1. How do the younger and older generations of teachers define intergenerational learning?
2. Are younger and older generations of teachers eager to learn from each other?
3. What forms and methods do younger and older generations of teachers use for learning from each other?
4. What kind of experiences do younger and older generations of teachers share with each other?
5. With which issues do younger and older generations of teachers help each other?
6. With which behaviors do younger and older generations of teachers affect each other?

Method

Research Model

This study is designed as a qualitative study. In qualitative studies, researchers try to describe the social environment being researched (Kuş, 2003). Qualitative research is a kind of research in which data collection methods such as observation, interviews, and document analyses are employed, and the perceptions and cases are realistically and holistically exhibited in their natural environment (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this study, which includes applications of intergenerational learning in primary schools, the phenomenological design was used as the qualitative research design. Phenomenology aims at clarifying and understanding the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon whether by one individual or many individuals (Patton, 2014). The phenomenology design focuses on facts of which we are aware but of which we don't have in-depth or detailed understanding. In the world we live in, we can confront phenomena in the form of events, experiences, perceptions, tendencies, concepts, and circumstances. Phenomenology provides an appropriate research base for studies that aim to research facts which while not completely foreign to us, also do not make much sense (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The fact discussed in this study is "intergenerational learning."

Participants

Qualitative research typically focuses on relatively small, purposefully-selected samples (Patton, 2014). The study group consists of eight primary schools in the central district of Düzce during the 2013-2014 academic year, and 13 primary school teachers who teach in these schools. Participants were selected among teachers working in the center of Düzce by using the criterion sampling method, one of the purposive sampling methods. In accordance with this method, teachers with one- to ten-years experience or more than 25-years experience in the designated schools were included in the research. Four teachers of three-, four-, six-, and eight-years experience, as well as two teachers with five-years experience were included in the research. Among the older generations of teachers, one each of 28-, 34-, 35-, 36-, and 43-years experience, as well as two teachers with 27-years experience were included. All younger generation participants have bachelor's degrees from the Faculty of Education's Department of Classroom Teaching. One of the older generation participants is a High-School Teacher graduate, three of them are Training Institute graduates, and the other three graduated with bachelor's degrees from the Faculty of Education. A total of 13 teachers met face-to-face. Seven of them were male and six of them were female. Four older-generation participants were male and three were female. Three of the younger generation participants were male and the other three were female. Teachers working in primary schools in center-city Düzce talked face-to-face; they were informed about the subject, purpose, and method of the study. At a designated time and date, the 13 teachers who had accepted the application met face-to-face in a suitable school environment. In qualitative research, the interview method is implemented to have interviews with a limited number of people during the course of data collection (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Therefore, the number of interviewees was found to be sufficient.

Data Collection and Data Collection Tools

The interview technique was used in this study. In qualitative researches, interviewers try to find out about a particular issue, and attempt to reveal it by listening to the participants' examples, narratives, stories, statements, and myths (Kuş, 2003). As a result of the surveys in the literature, the researcher determined question-types relative to the subject of IGL. These question-types were based upon studies that included training or application programs, and

IGL articles mostly about children and parents or university students and elders. The questions were organized around teachers with the help of key words such as “observation,” “modeling,” “learning,” and “utilization of experiences” in the literature. On the eve of the research, the number of questions was set at nine after conducting preliminary interviews with the teachers in school. In order to ensure validity of the interview questions that the interviewer had prepared and to evaluate the level of correct comprehension and consistency of the questions for the subject being researched, two domain experts were consulted. Following the suggestions given by the experts, the questions were put into a final form and the number of questions was reduced from nine to six. Content validity was provided in this way. Three questions were removed because two of them sought answers similar to topics from other questions, and one of them was considered unnecessary in terms of its irrelevance to the topic. The first four questions were about the characteristics of teachers, and all six questions were directed toward the purpose of the study. The data was collected through semi-structured interview questions. The interviews were carried out in suitable school environments, taking approximately 20 to 30 minutes per participant on a date and time designated by the participants. In the course of the interview, the researcher recorded the participants’ views in writing; an audio recorder was also used for the nine participants who had given permission for this.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive analysis, a branch of qualitative research. Before analyses were carried out, the participants’ data was computerized. The tape-recorded speech and written form of each participant were compared. Such an application is performed to check for misunderstandings as well as statements or sentences that were missed while transcribing the views of participants during the interview. The interview questions were regarded as the main themes. For the purpose of providing reliability to the research and testing whether the created codes represented the related main theme or not, the opinions of an academic experienced in qualitative research were sought, and this academic created codes as well. The academic’s and researcher’s codes were compared. The number of instances of agreement and disagreement was determined by these comparisons and Miles and Huberman’s formula (1994) was used (Reliability =

[Agreement / Agreement + Disagreement] x 100) for the purpose of reliability. Reliability for this study was calculated at 91%.

The original statements of the participants were faithfully quoted during the course of data analysis for the purpose of providing further reliability as direct quotations are generally used in descriptive analysis to openly reflect the views of the participants. Here the aim is to present the reader with the findings in a regulated form alongside the interpretations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

Older generation participants were coded from P1 through to P7; younger generation participants were similarly coded from P1 through to P6. While the statements of participants were transferred, they were coded as “P1, F, O, 28” (Participant 1, Female, Old, 28-years experience) as one example.

Findings and Interpretation

The findings were discussed in the direction of the sub-goals of the research. The acquired findings were gathered into six main themes: definition of intergenerational learning, willingness towards intergenerational learning, intergenerational learning methods, intergenerational learning experiences, subjects of intergenerational cooperation, and behaviors of intergenerational learning.

Younger and Older Generations of Teachers: Their Definitions of Intergenerational Learning

Teachers from younger and older generations defined IGL as the mutual sharing of knowledge, skills, attitudes, experiences, and competences through observing and modeling each other by bridging the gap between teachers from older and younger generations with the help of volunteer-based interactions. The first question was “Considering your intramural experiences and applications, what does intergenerational learning in schools mean to you?” Some of the answers the older generations of teachers gave were “IGL is, in general, when seniors learn technological developments from youths, and youths direct themselves by observing the positive behaviors of older teachers in society and school.” (P6, F, O, 27). “IGL is a process that includes utilizing accumulated knowledge and energy based upon good observation.” (P2, M, O, 27). “IGL is an application for bridging the gap between newer and older teachers.” (P7, M, O, 34). “IGL is the integration of old and young, refreshing what is missing in the soul.” (P1, M, O, 28). “IGL

is the inclusion of new information and methods in educational environments. IGL is not about knowing a lot, but about being able to transfer what you do know." (P4, M, O, 35).

Younger generation participants laid emphasis on IGL mostly in terms of experience and information transfer. Naturally, younger generation participants are conscious of the knowledge and experience that senior teachers have accumulated. Common points among the younger generation's definitions are the transfer of information and experiences, a volunteer-based exchange of information, and transferring knowledge of the craft, technology, and skills. Some of the younger teachers' definitions of intergenerational learning are these:

"IGL is the utilization of senior teachers' experiences and knowledge..." (P1, F, Y, 8). "It is the voluntarily based exchange of information with more experienced teachers." (P2, F, Y, 5). "IGL is the transfer of knowledge of the craft. Necessary information is reached when it is needed." (P3, F, Y, 3). "IGL is the transfer of accumulated information and experience from experienced teachers to younger teachers, and the transfer of technological knowledge and competence from younger generations of teachers to the older ones..." (P4, M, Y, 6).

Apart from the teachers who lean towards IGL, two teachers from the younger generation emphasized the fact that negative learning from the older generation also takes place. They defined IGL as "a situation that saps energy and motivation." As is shown, IGL not only causes positive learning but also negative learning. Some teachers from the younger generation laid emphasis on how teachers from the older generation affected them negatively. Some of the direct quotations that express the views of teachers on this topic are:

"It is a case in which senior teachers want to get fish which are always the same shape and size; instead of learning how to fish, they sap younger teachers' energy and motivation." (P2, F, Y, 5). "IGL is a two-way street about which I ask myself 'Will I be like that?' when I see senior teacher role models who are either positive or negative. While I envy some of them, I also catch a glimpse of sharing a similar future with those that I fear may negatively affect my motivation." (P3, F, Y, 3).

Willingness towards Intergenerational Learning

Teachers from the older generation stated that those from the younger generation are eager to learn from

themselves when they confront a problem, become interested, or feel they need help with an issue. While going over the older generation of teachers, classroom management and ways of coping with student behaviors were the main subjects that the younger generations of teachers need to learn. Older generations of teachers think that the younger generation of teachers is not eager enough to learn for the purpose of improving themselves. According to the older ones, the reasons for this insufficiency are a lack of communication, discontinuity of the situations which require learning, and differences in departments. Some of the views of the older generation of teachers on this issue are as follows:

"Actually, they are not so eager. I'm in touch with very few of them. We do not engage in dialogue so much. When one of my teacher friends confronts a problem and calls on my help to find a solution, I guide him or her." (P1, M, O, 28). "There are eager ones as well as reluctant ones. Mostly, I am in touch with a group of friends who teach the same branch as I. Information exchange with them becomes more natural. When we start to talk about a subject, I notice that my friends who are younger in the group pay closer attention to it; they show this by asking questions. Such conversations occur far less with my fellow classroom teachers who are not members of my department." (P2, M, O, 27). "Although rare, it sometimes occurs. They are mostly eager to deal with student behaviors. I don't know exactly whether the ones who are reluctant have high self-confidence, are ignoring me, have no need, or are afraid of arousing a feeling of deficiency." (P6, F, O, 27). "Some of my friends always ask me. Maybe something happens in class, maybe they are not able to settle a matter about student success, or maybe they have confronted a problem with a family. On these subjects, they come to me for information." (P7, F, O, 34). "They are not eager because they are not aware of their deficiencies." (P3, M, O, 36).

Just as the older generation of teachers, teachers from the younger generation expressed that the older generation are not eager enough to learn from them. While one of the younger generation participants answered "no" to this question of willingness, five participants answered "rarely." According to the younger generation participants, the older generations of teachers are mostly eager to learn technology-based subjects, especially about computer use. This willingness sometimes occurs voluntarily, and sometimes out of necessity. It takes the shape of impermanent learning for some of them.

Aside from that, it is seen that the older generations of teachers are more eager to communicate with younger teachers who deliver an outstanding performance. According to younger generation participants, some of the reasons that force older generations of teachers to learn are their inability to follow the latest developments, or information and applications obtained in the past have failed to satisfy; an outstanding performance than serves as a model. Some of the direct quotations that express the views of younger generation participants on this topic are shown below:

“They do not intend to learn. They just talk in order to instantly resolve problems. Unfortunately, this is not permanent learning. When they re-encounter the same problem, they ask for help again.” (P2, F, Y, 5). “They are eager about subjects requiring technological information. Because they can’t follow the latest developments, they often ask for help with computers.” (P1, F, Y, 8). “They are eager to learn about situations which occurred later on, during processes which they are unaware of. They are inclined to make no bones about maintaining what they have learned and practiced in the past.” (P4, M, Y, 6). “I don’t think they review themselves. Teachers who take their job seriously can get information from you without hesitation if you deliver an outstanding performance or your class is the popular one. I have observed that they are close to one of my friends who is like that. I can’t say that they are eager to learn something from us.” (P6, M, Y, 5).

Intergenerational Learning Methods

As far as preferred methods of learning from younger generations of teachers go, older generation participants more often prefer inquiry-based learning. This is followed respectively by observational learning, learning by listening to conversations in a natural environment, and learning by imitating practices and methods. Apart from these, there are also participants who expressed that they used combinations of two methods. Some of older generation participants’ views on this topic are:

“When I face a problem, I generally learn the solution by asking my young friend whose experience I rely on. Especially in a suitable environment, I do not hesitate to ask one of my friends who have proven that they are hardworking and can produce.” (P3, M, O, 36). “In spite of the fact that I am a classroom teacher, I sometimes ask questions to teachers in my branch about their fields. My questions are about

math particularly, sometimes about science.” (P5, F, O, 43). “On the very rare occasions when I’ve had trouble with lessons taught by branch teachers, I ask the pertinent teacher about the lesson in order to learn it... I ask questions about how I can overcome the problem and teach it.” (P6, F, O, 27). “I think I learn from them by observing their behaviors and conversations. I can’t remember a moment when I asked a friend ‘How?’” (P2, F, O, 27). “Sometimes I learn by observing, other times I learn by asking about what’s on my mind.” (P1, M, O, 28). “During breaks, issues about education and training are generally discussed in the common room. Our school is success-oriented. There is a competitive environment. There is a constant exchange of information due to the fact that the highest-scoring class is considered to be successful. For example, I ask teachers in fields that can academically support my studies what they would do.” (P4, M, O, 35).

In learning from older generations of teachers, the younger generation participants used such methods as observational learning, inquiry-based learning, learning by means of impressions gained in natural environments, and more. One of the participants stated that they couldn’t say they had learned anything. Some of the directly transferred views of the younger generation participants on methods of learning related to this follow:

“Sometimes I learn by asking; other times I take some of their applications in classroom management as examples. I imitate the effective applications of senior teachers in teacher-parent relationships. I use their methods of problem-focused coping, and communication, especially in the face of a significantly problematic situation.” (P2, F, Y, 5). “Sometimes I ask them. The more teachers talk about education and training in the common room, the more I can learn, whether intentionally or unintentionally. I do not ask about lessons, but if an older teacher’s application for student behavior attracts my attention, I ask a teacher how they managed so-and-so, and I apply it to my class or student.” (P5, M, Y, 4). “In my early years, I asked many questions about many subjects. I sometimes asked about math problems that I could not solve or had difficulty understanding. These days, my attention is attracted to authentic examples that sit well in me, examples where one mentions a situation where they succeeded or utilized something in a natural environment, without the purpose of instructing me.” (P6, M, Y, 5).

When the views of teachers from both younger and older generations are compared, it is observed

that inquiry-based learning is the more preferred method for the older generation of teachers, with observational learning coming second. Younger generation participants have a reverse situation where observational learning is more preferred by them, and inquiry-based learning comes second. In reality, observations between teachers contribute considerably to teachers who want to improve their teaching skills and competences. Thus teachers who observe each other can evaluate their own teaching skills, and by viewing new activities, they can both improve and sharpen their self-consciousness. Observations among teachers strengthen the ties between colleagues. In other words, by working together in the course of observation attempts, teachers share their experiences and strengthen their relationships (Hatip, 2006).

Another finding of the research is that learning by listening to conversations in a natural environment is a method more preferred by teachers from younger generations compared to older generations.

Intergenerational Learning Experiences

In contrast to teachers from older generations, those from younger generations do not talk about their experiences as much. The reasons participants gave for this included too many conversations being irrelevant to education and training, a lack of communication, inability to stay together for a long time, a lack of communication outside of school, formal communication, the age gap, and an abundance of intra-generational communication as opposed to intergenerational. Compared to the older generation, the main topics generally related to experiences mentioned by the younger generation of teachers were their first experiences teaching reading and writing, and vexing issues. In contrast to the older generation of teachers, younger ones in general do not often share their experiences with the older generation of teachers. Some of the older generation participant views on this topic are:

"I work in a school where the majority is women. People do not talk about their teaching experiences. We have brief conversations. Formal communications at school hinder us a bit. There are troubles stemming from the age gap. There are many young teachers, but communication is insufficient." (P1, M, O, 28). "They talk about their first reading and writing methods, and the experiences which were the most difficult ones for them. Actually, we do not have sufficient time during our breaks to communicate with each other.

As we do not meet up outside of school, we do not have the opportunity to share our experiences." (P3, M, O, 36). "We are always in touch with each other, but very few people talk about their experiences. Young teachers generally talk with each other." (P5, F, O, 43). "They (young teachers) talk about them (their experiences). They mention their experiences on issues that are relatively vexing to them. They confide their bad experiences in order to find a solution. If one is a teacher who can't teach how to read and write within the time provided, this experience is open for discussion." (P4, M, O, 35).

Teachers from the younger generation have the opinion that sharing experiences between generations is much more than what older ones think it is. The main topics of the experiences that are shared are the behaviors of problem students, relationships with students and parents, and classroom management. Some of the younger generation participants stated that the older ones usually talk about their experiences, while others stated that the older ones rarely do this. Some of the participants expressed the opinion that more communication and spending more time together increases the sharing of experiences. Some of the teachers' views on this topic are given below:

"They talk about their experiences. This occurs in the course of conversations in the common room, in a natural atmosphere. They generally talk about their experiences related to the behaviors of problem students. They do not talk much about academic issues." (P1, F, Y, 8). "They generally talk about their experiences with student behaviors. They mention the profiles of former students and parents, and they complain about today's students and parents. They talk about their experiences with classroom management. They say how they have created such a classroom environment that, in the absence of teacher in class, the students behave as if there is a teacher there." (P5, M, Y, 4). "We communicate too infrequently. Aside from this, though, they tell their experiences and memories, including the solutions to problems that we confront in education and training. They mention their experiences on ways of teaching a lesson, classroom management, completing the curriculum on time. Of course, I can't say that this happens all the time or every year." (P3, F, Y, 3).

One of the younger generation participants pointed out that experience sharing does not occur steadily or regularly. This participant laid emphasis on the importance of sincerity in experience sharing, thereby, on the concept of confidence.

“...experience sharing is not a steady or regular situation. The more you spend time together, the more you find things to talk about. Most of these are issues that are irrelevant to education and training. As a matter of course, you cannot talk about education and training all the time. Sincerity is very important. If you are not sincere, conversations with you become too short and too formal, people become reluctant to talk to you. Issues about classroom management are more frequently mentioned.” (P6, M, Y, 5).

A younger generation participant who stated that she works in an environment where competition and academic achievement are at the forefront said that experiences are talked about very often in her school. The distinguishing effect of school culture can be mentioned here:

“I teach in a competitive environment in terms of student success. Teachers often talk about the methods and techniques they have used. They do not do this with the intent of instruction. Also they aren't worried about sharing their experiences or being helpful. They are excited; they are working and talking so much.” (P2, F, Y, 5).

Compared to teachers from the younger generation, the experiences told by the older generation are mostly about school management experiences. Other experiences they share are about topics such as teaching methods, keeping pace with the curriculum, the behaviors of students and parents, and the solutions to problems confronted in education and training. In general, experience sharing for older and younger generations of teachers in school is found to be insufficient. In addition to this, teachers from the older generation have been observed to talk about their experiences much less than the younger generation.

Intergenerational Cooperation Subjects

The older generations of teachers expressed that the younger generation helps them the most with information and communication technology. Other issues which the younger ones support the older generation with are providing documents, sources, and regulations. Two older generation teachers asserted that they don't receive any help from the younger teachers. Some of the views of the older generation of teachers on this topic are:

“I generally ask for help and learn about technological issues. This is because we did not grow up in a time when these technological devices

were common. We did not use these devices in our learning process, neither through practice nor experience.” (P2, M, O, 27). “I get their help using technology. I call my friend and they come and help me. This generally occurs when I face a problem. I look at the way they choose to solve the problem and I learn it. I do not do this twice. In other words, I do not ask for help from them on the same subject a second time.” (P7, F, O, 34). “They generally help us with providing documents and using technological devices. They help with using the internet, projector, and computer.” (P4, M, O, 35). “I have difficulty in following new developments, regulations, and memos. They inform me about these when they talk about them. In addition to this, I ask for help with school technologies.” (P5, F, O, 43).

Teachers from younger generations expressed that teachers from older generations helped them the most with solutions to educational problems. Apart from this, they received help with classroom management, approaches to students requiring special training, parent-teacher relationships, following-up on regulations, and instructional planning. Some of the younger generations' views on this topic are:

“Generally, they help by telling me their own experiences related to what I'm going through. When I mention a problematic situation that I face in the classroom, they share their experiences related to this situation and make recommendations.” (P4, M, Y, 6). “They help me with issues on classroom management and parent-teacher relationships. They motivate us at times. They help us overcome problems.” (P2, F, Y, 5). “If I do not ask about anything, nobody helps me. They rarely help. It is very rare that someone sees what I'm going through and says ‘it would be better if you did it like this.’ They have shown me how to tackle adversities with parents and how to relate with problem students.” (P6, M, Y, 5). “They help mostly in classroom management. For example, they give a hand with the behaviors of problem students.” (P1, F, Y, 8). “They help with following regulations regarding important matters and with the planning process every other day.” (P5, M, Y, 4).

According to the comparison of views of older and younger generations of teachers, new technology usage is the main issue in which teachers from older generations receive help from the younger ones, while the solution to educational problems is the main issue in which teachers from the younger generation get help from the older ones. Following up on regulations and instructional planning are

among the topics which teachers get the least help. For this situation, it would be effective if school management made oral regulatory announcements and plans were placed in teachers' guide books.

Intergenerational Learning of Behaviors

Teachers from older generations expressed that they are sometimes affected by the positive behaviors of the younger generation, and while recalling the positive behaviors, negative behavioral affectations were also recalled. Attending class on-time, maintaining clothing, ways of communication, consistently extending kindness and respect, being hardworking, working properly, and friendliness in relationships were cited as examples of the positive behaviors of younger generations of teachers that affected the older generations. Being late for class, attending a class with a cup of tea, student punishments, negative application of classroom management, failings in the physical environment of class were shown as examples of negative behavior. The older generations of teachers stated that they do the opposite of these behaviors, namely the "right thing;" they learn from the failures of the younger generation. One of the older generation participants expressed that the younger generation's behaviors do not have a positive effect. Some of the views of the older generation of teachers on this topic are:

"When I observe their application of classroom management, my belief in not ending up like them is strengthened. I do not fail in the physical environment of class. There are also ones who have a positive effect. I am affected positively by some of their styles of behavior and communication, their kindness and respect" (P2, M, O, 27). "Friends who attend class on-time and take care of their clothes have a positive effect on me. There are also negative behaviors which prompt me to take much more care with positive behaviors. For example, being late for class, attending a class with a cup of tea, punishments for students, etc. When I see these, I really get my act together. Thus I am affected positively." (P1, M, O, 28). "They do their job properly. They are energetic. This makes me happy and they set an example for us." (P4, M, O, 35). "I am affected by their friendliness in our relationships and the way they take care of their clothes. I make myself presentable; in this way they affect me positively." (P7, F, O, 34).

Teachers from the younger generation expressed that they are affected positively by many behaviors of the older generation of teachers. The style and

patience that the older generation shows, the way they communicate with parents, the performance they show despite their advanced age, the jobs they hold, their love of work, their work discipline, their knowledgeableness and capabilities, and their attitude of "the person comes first" can be cited as examples of positive behaviors that affect the younger generation of teachers positively. However, one of the teachers from the younger generation criticized some of the older ones for exhibiting negative behaviors such as having low levels of worry about education and training, and taking the easy way out. Some of the teachers' views from the younger generation on the behaviors of the older generation are:

"I can say that it's not all of their behaviors that affect me positively but their patience and style." (P1, F, Y, 8). "The way they communicate with parents affects me positively. The most helpful thing for me is that they talk about issues regarding education and training in the common room." (P3, F, Y, 3). "The dignity, sobriety, and performance that some (not all) of them show despite their advanced age, as well as the jobs they hold, affect me positively. Elders have a perspective of 'the human comes first.' They have the understanding that a good person is a successful person. I have adopted this attitude." (P4, M, Y, 6). "There are not only positive behaviors but also negative behaviors that affect me. Try and think of a teacher with 30 years experience who has lost no love for their work and discipline, someone you admire and envy. I have rarely seen anyone like that." (P6, M, Y, 5). "They generally affect me negatively. As they have low levels of worry, they are too careless. They can use their experience to their advantage and take the easy way out. Such a situation does not apply to all." (P2, F, Y, 5).

The behavioral patterns of younger and older generations of teachers with a mutual effect are quite different from each other. Considering this conclusion and the other conclusions above, it can be said that for different generations of teachers, IGL is an important concept and tool that provides learning opportunities, contributes to teaching methods, and enables the transfer of experience and practice, thereby affecting the productivity and performance of teachers as well as student success.

Results

Discussion and Suggestions

In the light of the interviews and the data obtained, it was determined that IGL is not a constant situation in school environments, nor is it carried

out deliberately, intentionally, efficiently or consciously. Teachers occasionally perform various applications of IGL. In accordance with the first sub-goal of the research, the main theme, definitions of the term 'Intergenerational Learning,' was created. On the basis of this theme, each of the participants gave important answers by academically looking at different aspects. These answers as such provided determination for the existing situation related to IGL. In light of the answers given by participants, IGL can be defined as "the process of a mutual sharing of knowledge, skills, attitudes, experiences, and competences through observation and through modeling each other, thus bridging the gap between older and younger generations of teachers with the help of voluntarily-based interactions. Teachers regard IGL as a learning style which provides rejuvenation of missing energy through the transfer of experience and information between generations, which integrates the old and the new. IGL, an important tool for improving skills, decreasing differences, and improving and leading oneself, is also considered to be an interactive process in which methods of observation, modeling, and questioning are used. This definition coincides with the definitions in the literature (Cabanillas, 2011; Cherri Ho, 2010; Ropes, 2013; Wermundsen, 2007). Notions such as mutual love and understanding, a closer and more interdependent society, a more cohesive community, and intergenerational understanding and respect come to the forefront in families and social structures that tend to exclude the elderly (Hernandez & Gonzalez, 2008). These notions do not take place in the definitions acquired by the research, so this may mean that teachers do not have tendencies towards such exclusions or being excluded; at least there is no reason which gives rise to a conflict on this matter.

In accordance with the second sub-goal of the research, the main theme, willingness toward IGL, was created. On the basis of this theme, it was observed that younger and older generations of teachers are not eager enough to learn from each other in order to improve themselves. However, information turns into a meaningful activity when it is shared and used in a way that adds values to the individual (Uslu, Rodoplu Şahin, & Çam, 2012).

In accordance with the third sub-goal of the research, the main theme, intergenerational learning methods, was created. On the basis of this theme, younger and older generations of teachers preferred inquiry-based learning more as a method for learning from each other. The next preferences

for learning were observational learning, gaining impressions from conversations and applications in a natural environment, drawing from applications, and methods as examples. In Corrigan, McNamara, and O'Hara's research (2013), which explored the benefits of engaging higher education students in intergenerational learning activities, it was confirmed that people learn from one another through such processes such as observational learning, imitation, and modeling (Corrigan et al., 2013). The existence of efficient communication, educational applications and methods in schools, conversations about education and training during break times, sharing good educational applications and knowledge, and having teachers who are qualified for their profession, all of these promote intergenerational learning between teachers.

In accordance with the fourth sub-goal of the research, the main theme, intergenerational learning experiences, was created. On the basis of this theme, the experience of sharing in general among older and younger generations of teachers was found to be insufficient in schools. Utilizing experiences conclusively favors the older generations of teachers. IGL can provide the opportunity to gain experiences for both groups of participants. In the business world, however, sharing experiences is considered to be so important that when employers have observed that young employees cannot supply the experiences of older employees, they tend to prefer older people, utilizing them for sharing experience with their young colleagues (Dülger, 2012). When IGL is viewed from this aspect, it is seen to be an important tool for transferring experiences, new information, and new applications into educational institutions.

In Turkey and in the literature of other countries, there are very few studies on intergenerational learning between teachers. When studies similar in nature are examined, IGL is seen to contribute significantly between generations. According to one of these studies, Jane and Robbins (2007) determined that intergenerational interaction is beneficial not only for grandchildren, but for grandparents as well. Their research findings showed that intergenerational learning and interaction provide benefits for grandparents, such as having a good time with their grandchildren, relaxation, sharing special times, and feeling emotionally fulfilled, at the same time as they reinforce their grandchildren scientifically and technologically in thinking and learning (Jane & Robbins, 2007). Another study, performed by

Kenner, Ruby, Jessel, Gregory, and Arju (2007), demonstrated that when young children and grandparents jointly participate in events ranging from storytelling to computer activities, the exchange of knowledge enhances learning for both generations. While intergenerational exchange differs according to each family's linguistic and cultural background, the most striking finding is that many aspects are similar. In their study, it was determined that through a mutual-learning relationship, grandparents pass on knowledge of family history, language, and culture to their children while children offer new knowledge to the older generation (Kenner et al., 2007). When compared to older generation participants, younger ones generally mentioned their first reading and writing teaching experiences as well as their experiences on vexing issues. In comparison to the younger generation of participants, older ones rarely mentioned their experiences regarding solutions to problems confronted in education or training, ways for teaching lessons, classroom management, or how to complete a curriculum on time; they usually mentioned their experiences dealing with the behavior of problem students, relationships with parents, and classroom management.

In accordance with the fifth sub-goal of the research, the main theme, subjects of intergenerational cooperation, was created. On the basis of this theme, IGL takes place as a process in which the younger generation of teachers provides the older ones more with technological issues, and the older generation of teachers conveys their experiences to the younger ones. The effort to obtain, share, and transfer information in our information society forces people to use information-technology applications (Uslu et al., 2012). The need for demanding technological support can be an inevitable situation for today's older generation of teachers because there is an ever-changing, growing, and renewing difference between the information and communication technologies of the days in which they grew up and the ones of today. Nowadays, communication and information technologies are used even in primary school, and the older generations of teachers are in ever-increasing need of the younger generation's knowledge and support in order to meet their own needs regarding technological information.

In studies originating particularly from the USA and Europe, the basic effect of generations on business life are categorized into four groups: Traditionalists (1925-1946), Baby Boomers (1946-1963), Generation

X (1963-1981), and Generation Y (1981-2000). Each generation has specific characteristics peculiar to European and American societies. One of Generation Y's characteristic features is that they have grown up with technology, computers, cell phones, and the Internet, and they follow technology closely. Though the Turkish version of Generation Y is different from Europe's and America's in some respects, it is similar to them in how technology is used and closely followed (Yüksekbilgili, 2013). By reason of the fact that Generation X corresponds to technological revolution, they started to use technology out of necessity. Generation Z (2000-2021), or "digitarians," are considered to be the children of the technological age in the proper meaning of the word (Keleş, 2011). As per the research, it is not strange to find older generations of teachers who can be included in Generation X, asking for help from the younger generation of teachers, who can be included in Generation Y, on relative technologically-based issues. This is because the situation bears a resemblance to European and American societies.

In accordance with the sixth sub-goal of the research, the main theme, behaviors of intergenerational learning, was created. On the basis of this theme, the younger generation of participants was less optimistic than the older generation of participants about being affected positively by behaviors that they observe. Teachers who had witnessed negative applications and behaviors were observed to be indirectly positively affected by this, as these negative actions called to mind the positive counter-behaviors. The older generation of participants indicated that they were affected by the younger generation of participants regarding timely class arrival, taking care of one's clothes, friendliness in relationships, their style, their way of communication, and the extent to which they showed kindness and respect, gave energy, and worked properly. The younger generation of participants stated that they were affected by the older ones through their style and patience, their way of communicating with parents, their teaching methods and applied strategies, their exhibited performances, the jobs they hold, losing nothing of the love for their work and discipline, for their knowledge and skills, and for their perspective of "the human comes first."

Apart from these, one impression received during the course of interviews was that the knowledge leaders among both administrators and teachers are essential for the application of IGL in schools. Dfouni and Croteau (2003) defined knowledge leaders as

people who provide the formation of knowledge-sharing culture in an organization, who create the infrastructure that facilitates knowledge transfer and storage, and who are the builders and maintainers of systems that enable mutual learning for individuals in an organization (as cited in Doğan & Kılıç, 2009, p. 95). Based on this definition, it can be said that knowledge leaders have important roles in enabling and activating applications of IGL. Consequently, leadership behaviors should aim toward encouraging the use of knowledge not for individual advantage but for the benefit of the organization as a whole (Jain & Jeppesen, 2013). According to Senge (1994 as cited in Yee, 2008), successful organizations in a knowledgeable society are found to have developed strong sharing and learning cultures among their staff members. IGL is an activity that can provide important opportunities for the acquisition and development of a learning culture. Furthermore, in light of the impressions obtained from the interviews, it was observed that the lack of a positive and encouraging organizational culture and climate in particular, as well as the lack of communication and confidence in schools, significantly obstruct the fulfillment of IGL applications.

IGL, within the scope of lifelong learning, can be considered as both the instigation and result of intergenerational cooperation and solidarity in

business life, especially in schools. In accordance with the findings of the research, some suggestions can be made in order to increase IGL applications among teachers in schools. For the purpose of keeping open the communication channels between younger and older generations of teachers, as well as for developing team spirit, social activities can be organized in and out of school by school management. For the purpose of institutionalizing intergenerational learning activities, providing awareness about this concept, and sharing points of view on education-training between younger and older generations of teachers, the Ministry of National Education in Turkey can organize in-service training programs based on the importance and necessity of this issue in seminar studies at the beginning and end of the academic year.

This study is limited in scope by the participants' views. Therefore, other researchers can do qualitative and quantitative studies in order to determine the instigations and outcomes of IGL. The influence of different independent variables on IGL can also be investigated. IGL's relationship with knowledge leadership and learning organizations can be researched. Investigations can be made on how IGL works during different stages of education, between teacher and teacher, teacher and student, and student and student, as well as what kind of obstacles may be encountered.

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