Attitudes of Employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education and School Administrators towards Strategic Planning

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to determine the attitudes of employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education and school administrators towards strategic planning. The research was designed as a survey model study. The population of the research consisted of employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya and school administrators in Kütahya city center. In the research, sampling method was not used as the aim was to reach the entire population. However, the analyses were done on the sample since the data could not be collected from the entire population. In the study, 176 participants (81 employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education, 95 school administrators) were contacted. Data were collected by the "Strategic Planning Attitude Scale". The Scale is composed of five dimensions as organizational development, distrust, productivity, efficiency, and resistance. For data analysis, descriptive statistics, one way analysis of variance, "Kruskal Wallis H Test", Mann Whitney U test and Pearson correlation analysis were used. According to the findings obtained from the study, it was determined that the employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya and the school administrators generally had positive attitudes towards strategic planning. However, a considerable number of the participants had negative attitudes such as distrust and resistance. The views of the participants varied according to position and period of service in certain dimensions. There were significant correlations between the dimensions of the "Strategic Planning Attitude Scale." The findings of the study show that the main reason for distrust and resistance of employees towards strategic planning is lack of information. In this context, studies to resolve lack of information particularly of employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education are suggested.

Key Words

Strategic Management, Strategic Planning, Employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education, School Administrators.

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Fast changes of the 21st century are now even faster, more complicated, and difficult to foresee (Harigopal, 2006). These changes force all organizations, including educational organizations to change (Gümüşeli, 2001). Today's case faced by organizations is the issue of adaptation or non-adaptation rather than "to be or not to be" (Yeniçeri, 2002). The role of educational administrators in a changing environment shifts from influencing certain applications for changes to leading changes in organizations (Balcı, 2001; Moos & Dempster, 1998). Educational organizations will be able to avoid such an uncertainty, depending on strategic management, which will enable them to survive in an effective and productive fashion rather than managing usual, daily work (Besler, 2003; Güçlü, 2003).

Strategic management, as a planned application for changes, and strategic planning, as a part of strategic management process, are means of maintaining effectiveness and productivity in educational organizations in such an uncertain environment (Altınkurt & Yılmaz, 2010). Because they are generally non-profit organizations, educational organizations which use public resources need to be managed better. Efficient and productive use of scarce public resources is only possible with good planning (Güçlü, 2003).

The term strategic management has been used in the literature, particularly in the business management literature, since 1980 (Eren, 1998). Strategic management is defined as the system of processes which include future-oriented decisions and activities to create and apply effective strategies and assess the results (Dinçer, 1998; Fred, 1997; Genç & Demirdöğen, 2000). Although strategic management includes general management procedures (Dinçer, 1998; Üzün, 2000), it mostly concerns managing activities which could ensure long term survival of organizations and bring competitive advantages into organizations (Güçlü, 2003; Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson, 1999; Ülgen & Mirze, 2004; Üzün, 2000).

In the literature, strategic management process generally consists of three stages: definition, application and assessment of strategies (De Witt & Meyer, 2004; Dess & Miller, 1993; Hatiboğlu, 1995; Thompson & Strickland, 1993; Ülgen & Mirze, 2004). These stages and the details of the stages are basically similar. Defining strategies, the first stage of strategic management process, corresponds to strategic planning (Ülgen & Mirze, 2004).

The term strategic planning appeared and was applied before the term strategic management. The term strategic planning was first used in military and business management during World War II. It was commonly used in higher education institutions in the 1970s and other schools in the 1980s (Işık & Aypay, 2004). Strategic planning studies in Turkey started in primary and secondary schools with Total Quality Management Application Instructions (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 1999), published in Journal of Announcements. Besides, designing strategic plans in public organizations became compulsory with Development Plans and "Public Financial Management and Control Law No. 5018". Furthermore, "Strategic Planning Workbook for Public and Non-profit Organizations", developed by Undersecretariat of State Planning Organization, was put into effect. Accordingly, studies for extending strategic planning in all public organizations were to be carried out within the framework of a calendar of gradual transformation. According to the calendar, MEB was obliged to develop the first strategic plan 2010-2014 by 2009 (MEB, 2006). The Ministry of National Education developed and published strategic plan 2010-2014 (MEB, 2009).

Strategic planning takes time and is a means of gathering many people with different tasks and knowledge and requires general commitment in organizations (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı [DPT], 2006). Successful strategic planning needs commitment from all employees to plans, which could be possible by strategic awareness. The aim of strategic planning is the growth of organizations, sustainable development and power. Strategic plans are produced with ideas within the framework of foresights of top management team and the participation of subordinates (Bircan, 2002). Surrounding changes must be considered while defining organizational strategies. However, there is no available prescription to guide what strategies will be successful under what surrounding circumstances. Research shows that successful organizations use different strategies under the same surrounding circumstances (Waddock & Isabella, 1999 cited in Aksu, 2002). Therefore, educational organizations need to develop their own strategic plans, taking both surrounding changes and organizational skills into account. Strategic planning management in organizations is fundamentally the competence of top management. Successful strategic planning applications require leaders who believe strategic thinking is essential and beneficial. Strategic planning applications in organizations do not pro-

duce outcomes without support from leaders (Aktan, 2003). The role of managers in this process is to raise awareness in all employees in organizations. Educational administrators, as strategic leaders, need to convince followers of the need for changes, create a shared organizational culture, support and provide opportunities for training and improvement of employees and intensify organizational communication (Altınkurt, 2007).

Strategic planning is a set of principled efforts for decision making and behavioral development, which show what organizations are, what functions they have and how they function or in other words how goals and fundamental purposes will be attained (Bryson, 1995). It is impossible to attain goals and purposes without effective strategies. Vision, mission, mutual fit for goals and purposes must be considered while defining strategies. Any kind of surrounding changes for an organization which could manage changes might be taken as opportunities (Yeniçeri, 2002). Following inner and outer surrounding analysis, strategic analysis is used to determine opportunities and threats caused by outer surrounding factors and strengths and weaknesses of domestic funding and skills (Ülgen & Mirze, 2004; Şimşek, 2009). It is even possible for successful organizations to convert threats into opportunities with effective strategies.

In the literature, there are suggestions that only strategic organizations could develop strategic plans, not any schools or organizations (Işık & Aypay, 2004). In fact, over-centralization of education in Turkey complicates autonomous decision making of lower managements except for the ministry central organization. Still, these organizations could make and apply strategic decisions under legal restrictions. Considering only the Ministry of National Education, the top authority in the education system, as a strategic organization will be an imperfect approach. Local organizations such as Provincial Directorates of National Education and schools can also make and apply strategic decisions under certain restrictions in order to develop their organizations or units. In this context, Provincial Directorates of National Education and schools are considered as strategic organizations in this research. There are also researchers in the literature who suggest that strategic planning is a means of management which could only be used in military organizations and businesses, not in educational organizations, and the researchers criticize strategic planning efforts (Bryson, 1995; Mintzberg, 2000;

Hambright & Diamontes, 2004). However, these criticisms are mostly based on disruption in practices. According to Bryson (1995), a strategic plan is not adequately flexible. Bryson suggests that an extra-plan case may later be overlooked by organizations. Yet, flexibility of strategic planning is superior to traditional planning. Such a case is against the nature of strategic management, because it does not mean planning future. Now that surrounding circumstances of organizations are constantly changing, strategic plans are case-specific and they cannot be changed into inalterable forms (Hatiboğlu, 1995). Nevertheless, it is known that there is such a risk for the illogically made plans to meet legal requirements. At this point, meanings attributed to strategic planning by organizational managers, employees and those who are affected by plans or briefly their attitudes will influence behaviors in strategic planning applications.

As in every application for changes, positive or negative attitudes of those who are affected by changes towards plans affect successful applications of plans. Baloğlu, Karadağ and Karaman (2008) divide positive and negative attitudes towards strategic planning into five categories. They are respectively; organizational development, efficiency and productivity, distrust and resistance. Positive attitudes towards plans will contribute to support for plans and successful strategic planning applications. Strategic planning is a critical means of attaining goals and fundamental purposes of organizations, increasing organizational development, efficiency and productivity and efficiently distributing scarce resources (Hofer & Schendel, 1978). However, attitudes like distrust caused by lack of information, or uncertainty may lead to resistance to strategic planning applications. In most cases, efforts for changes might lead to wasting resources and burnout, fears and depression in organizational members (Kotter, 1996). Cases where organizational changes are needed may also require changes in organizational culture, working styles and behavioral patterns. If managers cannot adapt external cases which enforce organizational changes to organizational components, efforts for changes could result in failure (Anderson & Anderson, 2001). Moreover, unless the atmosphere of distrust in an organization is resolved, resistance by employees will complicate successful applications of plans. Minimizing or resolving organizational distrust and resistance is possible with the help of awareness and skills. Managers must try to define the reason for negative attitudes towards changes (Kotter,

1996). Establishing communication with those who might be affected by changes, providing in-service trainings and involving representatives from every district in the planning process will considerably prevent negative attitudes of employees (Kaufman, Herman, & Watters, 1996; Kreitner, Kinicki, & Buelens, 2002; Şimşek, Akgemci, & Çelik, 2001).

In the literature, there are various studies on strategic planning in educational organizations (Ağaoğlu, Şimşek & Altınkurt, 2006; Altınkurt & Bali, 2009; Arabacı, 2002, 2005; Bell, 2002; Çalık, 2003; Erdem, 2006; Ereş, 2004; Güçlü, 2003; Hambright & Diamontes, 2004; Işık & Aypay, 2004; Kabadayı, 1999; Kaufman et al., 1996; Kotler & Murphy, 1981; Küçüksüleymanoğlu, 2004, 2008; Lumby, 1999; Türk, Yalçın, & Ünsal, 2006). Most of these studies are theoretical. The number of empirical studies on strategic planning in education is low. Among these, there is no research on attitudes of administrators and employees towards strategic planning. Yet, the greatest hindering factor for strategic planning applications concerns psychological factors and those who design and apply plans might have negative attitudes towards planning at the very beginning (Baloğlu et al., 2008). Defining shared attitudes towards strategic planning is critical in order to resolve future negativities before strategic planning and during strategic planning applications. Main aim of the study is to determine attitudes of employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education and school administrators towards strategic planning. To this end, the following questions are answered:

1. What attitudes do employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education and school administrators have towards strategic planning?

2. Do attitudes of employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education and school administrators towards strategic planning vary according to post, period of service, and institution?

Method

Design

The research was designed as a survey study. In the research, it was attempted to define past and current attitudes of employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education and school administrators towards strategic planning.

Population-Sample

The research had two populations: employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya (PDNE) and school administrators in Kütahya city center in the spring semester of 2008-2009 academic year. According to data provided by Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya, there were 129 employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya and 213 school administrators on the permanent staff (including school principals and deputy principals). Sampling method was not used in order to collect more reliable data, since the population was easily contacted, and the method was a survey model. Data gathering tools of the research were applied to the whole population, but 62% of employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya, and 50% of school administrators answered the questionnaire. After removing questionnaires which were not answered according to the given instructions, 176 questionnaires (61%) were evaluated and statistical proceedings were used. 10.2% of the participants (18 individuals) were administrators in Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya, 35.8% of them (63 individuals) were employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education, 17% of them (30 individuals) were school principals and 36.9% of them (65 individuals) were deputy principals. 4% of the participants (7 individuals) were in the work experience range of 5 years and below, 19.3% (34 individuals) were in the work experience range of 6–10 years, 19.3% (34 individuals) were in the work experience range of 11–15 years, 17.6% (31 individuals) were in the work experience range of 16–20 years and 39.8% (70 individuals) were in the work experience range of 21 years and above.

Data Gathering Tools

In the research, the "Strategic Planning Attitude Scale" was used as a data gathering tool. The "Strategic Planning Attitude Scale", which had five dimensions, was developed by Baloğlu et al., (2008). The dimensions of the scale were organizational development, distrust, productivity, efficiency and resistance. Confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses were used by Baloğlu et al., (2008) for structural validity of the scale. As a result of exploratory factor analysis, it was determined that it was a five-factor scale and the factorial eigenvalues of the items in the "Strategic Planning Attitude Scale" ranged from 0.41 to 0.87. The statistical

significance level of confirmatory factor analysis and chi-square value (x^2) of the model designed for the scale were calculated as (x^2=263.41, df=141). Moreover, the other fit indexes (GFI=0.91, AGFI=0.93, RMSR=0.05) of the model showed that the suggested model was eligible. The defined five factors explained 58.1% of total variance. Internal consistency of the "Strategic Planning Attitude Scale" was tested by Cronbach-Alpha, Guttman and Spearman coefficients, and the level of assertiveness was tested by test-retest method. In internal consistency studies of the scale, Cronbach-Alpha and Guttman and Spearman coefficients in the sub-factors ranged from 0.71 to 0.94. Cronbach-Alpha coefficient of the overall scale was found as 0.82, Guttman coefficient was found as 0.84 and Spearman coefficient was calculated as 0.83. Test-retest reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.81.

Reliability of the scale was retested. Accordingly, Cronbach-Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the overall scale was 0.82 and Guttman and Spearman coefficient was 0.80. For the dimension of organizational development, Cronbach-Alpha was calculated as 0.90 Guttman as 0.86 and Spearman coefficient as 0.87. For the dimension of distrust, Cronbach-Alpha was calculated as 0.85, Guttman as 0.81 and Spearman coefficient as 0.84. For the dimension of productivity, Cronbach-Alpha was calculated as 0.83, Guttman as 0.76 and Spearman coefficient as 0.80. For the dimension of efficiency, Cronbach-Alpha was calculated as 0.85, Guttman and Spearman coefficient as 0.79. For the dimension of resistance, Cronbach-Alpha was calculated as 0.67, Guttman as 0.52 and Spearman coefficient as 0.57. Cronbach-Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the sub-dimensions of the scale ranged from 0.67 to 0.90, Guttman coefficient from 0.52 to 0.86 and Spearman coefficient from 0.57 to 0.87. The calculated internal consistency coefficients were nearly the same as the original scale. Therefore, the scale was reliable. The "Strategic Planning Attitude Scale" consisted of total 35 items: 12 items in the dimension of organizational development, 9 items in the dimension of distrust, 7 items in the dimension of productivity, 4 items in the dimension of efficiency and 3 items in the dimension of resistance. The dimensions of distrust and resistance of the scale consisted of negative items. The answer sheet of the scale was five-point Likert type. On the Likert form, the following options were presented: "1-I totally disagree, 2-I disagree, 3-I occasionally agree, 4-I agree, 5-I totally agree". The minimum score of the overall scale was 35, and the maximum score of the overall scale was 175. The items in the sub-dimensions of dis-

trust and resistance were reversely scored in the overall evaluation of the scale. The increase in the overall score of the scale showed that attitudes towards strategic planning were positive.

Data Analysis

In the research, descriptive statistics such as arithmetic mean, standard deviation, percentage and frequency were used to determine the attitudes of employees of PDNE and school administrators towards strategic planning. Although the research was conducted with a population, the population was changed into a sample, since data could not be collected from the whole population. Therefore, predictive statistics were used to determine whether the attitudes of the participants towards strategic planning varied according to certain personal and professional qualities. In the research, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for comparing attitudes according to period of service. As a result of analysis of variance, "LSD Test" was applied in cases where "F test" statistics were significant. Although F tests showed whether the difference between the groups was statistically significant, they did not provide any data on the effect size of correlations between the variables. As a result of F test, η^2 (eta-squared) statistics were used to determine the size of the difference between the attitudes in cases where the difference was statistically significant. Typically, η^2 explains the percentage of variance of dependent variables explained by independent variables. In the research, η^2 values ranged from 0 to 1 (Pallant, 2003). When η^2 values converge to 1 the value of the effect size increases. The following ranges are mostly used for η^2 value interpretation (Pallant, 2003): An η^2 value ranging from 0,01 to 0,05 is considered as a slight effect, an η^2 value ranging from 0,06 to 0,13 as a moderate effect, and η^2 value greater than 0,14 as a strong effect. In the present study, it was seen that data were not normally distributed according to post. "Kruskal Wallis H Test" was used for comparing the attitudes of the participants according to post. As a result of "Kruskal Wallis H Test", "Mann Whitney U Test" was applied to define the reason for the difference. In the research, Correlation analysis was used to determine whether there were correlations between the dimensions of the attitudes of the participants towards strategic planning. Typically, a correlation coefficient ranging from 0.70 to 1.00 is considered as a high correlation, a correlation coefficient ranging from 0.69 to 0.30 as a moderate correlation and a correlation coefficient below 0.29 as a low correlation (Büyüköztürk, 2008).

Findings

In this section, the attitudes of employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education and school administrators towards strategic planning and comparisons of certain personal and professional variables are presented. In Table 1, descriptive statistics of the attitudes of the participants towards strategic planning are listed.

Table 1.

Attitudes of Employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education and School Administrators towards Strategic Planning

Sub-dimensions	N	$\bar{x}$	S
1.Organizational development	176	4.15	0.70
2.Distrust	176	3.70	0.84
3.Productivity	176	4.05	0.67
4.Efficiency	176	3.99	0.80
5.Resistance	176	3.63	1.00
Total	176	3.95	0.60

As it is clear from Table 1, arithmetic mean of the attitudes of employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education and school administrators towards organizational development dimension of strategic planning was 4.15. The arithmetic mean was 4.05 in the dimension of productivity, 3.99 in the dimension of efficiency, 3.70 in the dimension of distrust and 3.69 in the dimension of resistance. It was shown that the employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education and the school administrators had strong positive attitudes particularly towards organizational development and productivity dimensions of strategic planning. Arithmetic mean of the attitudes of the participants towards the overall scale was calculated as 3.95 out of 5. Generally speaking, it might be said that positive attitudes of the participants towards strategic planning are high and positive, although they are not very high. According to the participants, strategic planning mostly contributed to organizational development, productivity and efficiency. Correlation analysis was used to determine whether there were correlations between the dimensions of the attitudes of the participants towards strategic planning. The items in the dimensions of distrust and resistance, which consisted of only negative items in order to make correlations between the dimensions clearer, were not reversely encoded. In Table 2, findings about correlations between the dimensions are presented.

Table 2.
Correlations between the sub–dimensions of the "Strategic Planning Attitude Scale"

Sub–dimensions	Organizational development	Distrust	Productivity	Efficiency
Organizational development	-			
Distrust	-0.44*	-		
Productivity	0.77*	-0.36*	-	
Efficiency	0.71*	-0.23*	0.77*	-
Resistance	-0.28	0.63*	-0.23*	-0.14

*p<.01

As a result of the analyses, Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was calculated as 0.77 between the dimensions of organizational development and productivity, and as 0.71 between the dimensions of organizational development and efficiency. Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was found as 0.77 between the dimensions of efficiency and productivity. In the research, the calculated correlation coefficients indicated a high linear correlation between the dimensions. Therefore, an increase in positive attitudes of the participants in one of the dimensions of organizational development, productivity and efficiency brought an increase in their positive attitudes in the other dimensions. Pearson correlation coefficient between the dimensions of distrust and organizational development was found as (r) -0.44, and -0.36 between the dimensions of distrust and productivity, and as -0.23 between the dimensions of distrust and efficiency. There was a moderate correlation between the dimensions of distrust, organizational development and productivity, and a low negative correlation in the dimension of efficiency. Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between the dimensions of resistance and organizational development was calculated as -0.28, as -0.23 between the dimensions of resistance and productivity, and as -0.14 between the dimensions of resistance and efficiency. There was a low negative correlation between the dimensions of resistance and organizational development and between the dimensions of productivity and efficiency. There was a moderate linear correlation (r=0.63) between the dimensions of distrust and resistance, which were interpreted as negative attitudes. Hence, it was observed that a negative attitude in one of the dimensions affected the attitudes in the other dimensions.

The second sub-goal of the research was to determine whether attitudes of employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education and school administrators towards strategic planning varied according to post, period of service and gender. There was no significant difference between the attitudes of the participants according to gender. In Table 3, the results of comparison of the attitudes of the participants towards strategic planning according to "post" are presented.

Table 3.
Attitudes towards Strategic Planning According to Post

Sub-dimensions	Post	n	Row Mean	df	χ²	p	Difference
Organizational development	1. Administrator of PDNE	18	107.61	3	15.74	0.00*	1-2 (U= 329.5)
	2. Employee of PDNE	63	68.46				2-3 (U= 637.5)
	3. School Principal	30	98.40				2-4 (U= 1330)
	4. Deputy Principal	65	98.06				
Distrust	1. Administrator of PDNE	18	123.33	3	12.50	0.00*	1-2 (U= 301.0)
	2. Employee of PDNE	63	77.86				1-3 (U= 179.0)
	3. School Principal	30	97.57				1-4 (U= 315.0)
	4. Deputy Principal	65	84.98				
Productivity	1. Administrator of PDNE	18	111.28	3	4.99	0.17	-
	2. Employee of PDNE	63	81.13				
	3. School Principal	30	87.65				
	4. Deputy Principal	65	89.72				

Efficiency	1. Administrator of PDNE	18	107.31	3	6.96	0.07	-
	2. Employee of PDNE	63	76.44				
	3. School Principal	30	95.75				
	4. Deputy Principal	65	91.64				
Resistance	1. Administrator of PDNE	18	109.06	3	9.82	0.02*	1-2 (U= 339.5)
	2. Employee of PDNE	63	75.53				2-3 (U= 668.0)
	3. School Principal	30	103.77				
	4. Deputy Principal	65	88.33				

$p<.05$

In the research, administrators of Provincial Directorate of National Education (Provincial Director of National Education, vice director, assistant branch administrators and etc.) were grouped as "*administrator of PDNE*", whereas office workers, teachers under the supervision of the directorate and other employees were grouped as "*Employee of PDNE*". According to Table 3, the attitudes of the participants towards strategic planning did not significantly vary in the dimensions of productivity and efficiency. There were significant differences between the attitudes in the dimensions of "organizational development [$\chi^2(3)=15.74$, $p<0.05$]", "distrust [$\chi^2(3)=12.50$, $p<0.05$]" and "resistance [$\chi^2(3)=9.82$, $p<0.05$]". "Mann Whitney U" test was used to test which group caused the difference.

The difference between the attitudes of the participants in the dimension of "organizational development" was caused by the difference between the employees of PDNE, the administrators of PDNE, the school principals and the deputy principals. The administrators of PDNE and the school administrators had more positive attitudes towards strategic planning for further organizational development. The difference between the views of the participants in the dimension of "distrust" was

caused by the difference between the administrators of PDNE and the other groups. The administrators of PDNE had less distrust in strategic planning. The difference between the attitudes of the participants in the dimension of "resistance" was caused by the difference between the employees of PDNE, the administrators of PDNE and the school administrators. The employees of PDNE perceived strategic planning more negatively and they opposed to strategic planning applications. In Table 4, the results of comparison of the attitudes of the participants towards strategic planning according to "period of service" are presented. Because the number of the participants who were in the work experience range of 5 years and below in the period of service variable was low, periods of service of those who were in the work experience range of "5 years and below" and those who were in the work experience range of "6-10 years" were taken as the range of "10 years and above".

Table 4.
Attitudes towards Strategic Planning According to Period of Service

Dimensions	Period of Service	n	x̄	S	df	F	p	Difference
Organizational development	1.10 years and below	41	4.01	0.84	3-172	1.783	0.15	–
	2.11-15 years	34	4.07	0.74				
	3.16 -20 years	31	4.11	0.76				
	4.21 years and above	70	4.30	0.55				
Distrust	1.10 years and below	41	3.38	1.04	3-172	2.587	**0.05**	1-3
	2.11-15 years	34	3.73	0.83				1-4
	3.16 -20 years	31	3.78	0.84				
	4.21 years and above	70	3.83	0.68				$\eta^2=0,04$

Productivity	1.10 years and below	41	4.08	0.77				-
	2.11-15 years	34	3.94	0.58	3-172	0.390	0.76	
	3.16 -20 years	31	4.11	0.78				
	4.21 years and above	70	4.06	0.61				
Efficiency	1.10 years and below	41	3.94	0.96				-
	2.11-15 years	34	3.89	0.74	3-172	0.484	0.69	
	3.16 -20 years	31	4.12	0.80				
	4.21 years and above	70	4.01	0.74				
Resistance	1.10 years and below	41	3.34	1.08				-
	2.11-15 years	34	3.77	0.88	3-172	2.234	0.08	
	3.16 -20 years	31	3.48	1.07				
	4.21 years and above	70	3.80	0.95				

*p<.05

As it is clear from Table 4, there was a significant difference between the attitudes of the participants in the dimension of "distrust" ($F_{(3-172)}=$ 2.587, $p<0,05$) according to period of service. There was no significant difference between attitudes in the other dimensions. η^2 test was used to determine the size of the difference. η^2 value was found as 0.04. Thus, the difference between the attitudes of the participants was low. LSD test was used to determine the group which caused the difference. According to LSD test results, the difference between the attitudes of the participants in the dimension of distrust was caused by the difference between those who were in the work experience range of 10 years and

below and those who were in the work experience range of 16 years and above. Distrust towards strategic planning shown by the participants with shorter periods of service was higher than those with longer periods of service.

Results

The main aim of the study is to determine the attitudes of employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education and school administrators towards strategic planning. The attitudes of the participants towards strategic planning are examined under five dimensions. These are organizational development, distrust, efficiency, productivity and resistance. The attitudes of the participants towards strategic planning are generally positive although they are not very high. It is shown that the participants have stronger positive attitudes particularly in the dimensions of organizational development, productivity and efficiency of strategic planning. This finding reveals the fact that the participants considered strategic planning as a means of further organizational development, productivity and efficiency. However, distrust in strategic planning and resistance is considerably high. Successful strategic planning needs commitment of all employees to plans, which could be possible by strategic awareness (Altınkurt, 2007).

Positive attitudes of employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education and school administrators towards strategic planning contribute to successful strategic planning applications. Yet, precautions are needed to decrease shared distrust and resistance even though they are not high. The study shows that there is a linear correlation between the dimensions of organizational development, efficiency and productivity, while there is a negative correlation between these dimensions and the dimensions of distrust and resistance. There is a linear correlation between distrust and resistance. This finding is parallel to those provided by Baloğlu et al. (2008). At the same time, it is parallel to the finding provided by Şimşek et al. (2001) and Madden (2008) suggesting that potential resistance of those who are affected by changes might increase due to distrust in organization. In other words, an increase in distrust brings an increase in resistance to strategic planning. Similarly, a decrease in resistance and distrust strengthens belief in strategic planning for further organizational development, efficiency and

productivity. Resistance to strategic planning, as a planned application for changes, may cause various problems in strategic planning applications. It is likely that any attempts for changes in organizations will fail even before they are initiated if organizational members do not support these efforts. Opposition to changes might cause dissatisfaction and might be followed by regression and a series of health problems, absenteeism and lower productivity (London, 1990). However, exploring the reason for resistance by employees is better than assuming they will oppose to changes (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, & Konopaske, 2003). The lack of information is one of the main reasons for distrust and resistance by employees (Duke, 2004; Eccles, 1996; Erdoğan, 2002; Kreitner et al., 2002). In this context, educational administrators who manage strategic planning process need to consider changes as manageable processes rather than cases (Fullan, 2001). The best remedy at this point is introducing transparent management; trust in employees (Işık & Aypay, 2004) and activity plans to compensate for lack of information (Kreitner et al., 2002; Madden, 2008; Şimşek et al., 2001). When educational leaders convince followers of the need for changes, create a shared organizational culture, support and provide opportunities for training and improvement of employees and intensify organizational communication, they will decrease distrust in strategic planning and resistance and will contribute to more positive attitudes.

The study also attempts to determine whether attitudes of employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education and school administrators towards strategic planning vary according to post, period of service and gender. There is no significant difference between attitudes according to gender. Therefore, it might be suggested that femininity or masculinity is not an important predictor of attitudes towards of strategic planning.

There are differences in certain dimensions according to post and period of service. Attitudes towards strategic planning according to post do not vary in the dimensions of productivity and efficiency, but they vary in the dimensions of organizational development, distrust and resistance. Employees of Provincial Directorates of National Education and school administrators have more positive attitudes towards strategic planning for further organizational development. Administrators of Provincial Directorates of National Education constitute the group with least distrust in strategic planning. Employees of Provincial Directorates of Na-

tional Education perceive strategic planning in a more negative manner and they oppose to strategic planning more. This finding is supported by the result of the study which shows that there is a linear correlation between distrust and resistance and there is a negative correlation between distrust and organizational development. It is confirmed that distrust and resistance is mainly based on lack of information. In 2006, Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya started a strategic planning team which consisted of 9 individuals. In January 2007, a private consulting company provided a strategic planning training program. Provincial Director of National Education, all the administrators of Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kutahya, the strategic planning team, branch managers and one employee from each unit as representatives of the other employees were included in the training program. Since all the administrators of Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya had positive attitudes towards strategic planning and the least distrust and resistance, they were involved in the training program. The employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya, who showed the least participation in the training program, had distrust in strategic planning and resistance to strategic planning. It shows that information given in the training program has not been conveyed to the other employees since 2007. When the low number of employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya is taken into account, it might be suggested that a training program to include all the employees will decrease the current distrust and resistance. Also, considering top management responsible for strategic management and strategic planning might be the reason for this finding (Aktan, 2003; Ülgen & Mirze, 2004). In a study by Işık and Aypay (2004), employees who were not administrators considered strategic planning as an application of management enforced by law and as an arbitrary plan designed by top management team rather than a means of problem solving. The research findings are parallel to those provided by Işık and Aypay (2004). The reason why school administrators have positive attitudes towards strategic planning, similar to administrators of Provincial Directorates of National Education, might be the fact that they are a part of top management. Furthermore, as well as Total Quality Management, strategic planning studies in primary and secondary schools are carried out according to "Total Quality Management Application Instructions" and "Extending Curriculum Laboratory School (CLS) Applications Instructions", published in Journal of

Announcements (MEB, 1999). Thus, more positive attitudes of school administrators towards strategic planning might be caused by information about strategic planning and experience.

In the research, the attitudes of employees Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya and the school administrators towards strategic planning slightly varied according to period of service in the dimension of distrust. There were no differences between the attitudes in the other dimensions. Distrust in strategic planning shown by the employees with shorter periods of service was higher than distrust shown by those with longer periods of service. Posts of the employees with shorter periods of service were analyzed in order to define the reason for that case. As a result of analysis, it was shown that more than two-thirds of the participants in the work experience range of 10 years and below were the employees of Provincial Directorate of National Education of Kütahya. This finding explains the reason for distrust by those who have shorter periods of service in strategic planning.

Further studies in other provinces are needed to generalize the research results to Provincial Directorates of National Education and school administrators. Also, further research is advisable to define shared attitudes on a larger scale.

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