The Level of Quality of Work Life to Predict Work Alienation

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Abstract

The current research aims to determine the level of elementary school teachers' quality of work life (QWL) to predict work alienation. The study was designed using the relational survey model. The research population consisted of 1096 teachers employed at 25 elementary schools within the city of Van in the academic year 2010-2011, and 346 teachers were used for the sampling. The group (cluster) sampling method, a probability-based sampling method, was used in the current study. The scales of Quality of Work Life and Work Alienation were used as data collection tools. The data was analyzed through frequency, percentage, standard deviation, *t*-test, ANOVA, and regression analysis. Teachers who participated in the sub-dimension of QWL, mostly at medium levels, stated that the level of work alienation was low. Female teachers stated that their total area of lv ife was better than that of males, but female teachers more often felt powerless, meaningless, and isolated at schools. Married teachers stated that their total area of life was better than that of single teachers. Classroom teachers stated that they received less appropriate and fair compensation compared with subject-matter teachers. Teachers from the 6 to 10 year seniority group agreed the least that the working capacity at schools was developed, compared to teachers from the 11 to 15 yearand 16+ year seniority groups. It was found that the sub-dimensions of QWL were significant predictors of total area of life, democratic environment, social integration, healthy and safe working conditions, and appropriate and fair compensation. Also, the sub-dimensions of work alienation were significant predictors of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, and alienation from school.

Key Words

Alienation from School, Elementary School, Quality of Work Life (QWL), Teacher, Work Alienation.

Quality of Work Life (QWL)

The development of QWL in this literature is based on Trist et al.'s research on work, man and technology at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London (Cummings & Worley, 1997). Trist et al. developed the socio-technical system of understanding which combines developing technology and the social system together (Cummings, 1977). The socio-technical system aims to provide harmony between technology and an employee's social interaction in order for the organization to efficiently meet its goals (Balcı, 2005).

A complete consensus on the concept of QWL cannot be achieved. According to authors such as Coch and French (1948), Morse and Reiver (1956), and French and Israel (1960), QWL means democracy in the work environment (as cited in Cummings, 1977; Bragg & Andrews, 1973). This points to more participation by the employees in the decision making process. Margolis and Kroes (1974), House (1974), Kasl (1974), and Thomas (1974), on the other hand, view QWL as initiating change in order to provide more humane and healthier conditions as well as equity

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in sharing income sources. Many view QWL as a comprehensive approach to make work more humane and provide greater job satisfaction (Balcı, 1995; Travis, 1995). The concept of QWL often refers to the physical and psychological welfare in the work environment with regard to an employee's integration in their total area of life (Bilgin, 1995). Despite various views, basic conceptual QWL categories may be listed as follows (Beach, 1980; Cummings & Worley, 1997; Walton, 1972):

Total Area of Life: Total area of life includes all work related and non-work-related areas of life because both work and non-work related life influence each other (Bartolome&LeeEvans, 2001; Travis, 1995).

Safe and Healthy Work Conditions: The physical and health conditions at school play a significant role in increasing the QWL. Temperature, light, colors, cleanliness, classrooms, number of students, and overall safety are all considered to be factors affecting education employees (Başar, 1998; Fletcher, 1983; Hathaway, 1995; Johnson, 2001; Ling, Chik, & Pang, 2006; Uludağ & Odacı, 2002; White, 1990).

Improving the Working Capacity: Employees want their knowledge, skills, and experiences to be valued and continuously improved (Bodek, 2003). Employees continue to work enthusiastically as long as they are appreciated and valued (Eren, 1993).

Social Integration: Collaboration among employees, morale, trust, a sense of belonging, and relations with upper administration and colleagues are elements that affect QWL. It is important that employees collaborate, build trust among theirselves, and communicate continuously (Simon, Smithburg, & Thomson, 1980).

Democratic Environment: This refers to employees' active participation in administration. The employee who participates in the management and decision making process will be able to use his/her powers to solve organizational problems, identify with the organization, and more strongly integrate into the organization because the separation between the administrator and the administered is less (Kepenekçi, 2003).

Fair and Appropriate Compensation: Employees' economic safety and life-long securities such as rest, retirement, health, holidays, and unemployment coverage fall among the QWL interests (Cummings, 1977; O'Toole, 1974). Employees have fought for fair and appropriate compensation in their work life. Initially, this fight was only for financial benefits whereas recently promotion, rewards, working period, health plans, retirement, and many other things have been taken into account (Kaynak, 1990; Palmer & Winters, 1993).

Work Alienation

Hoy, Blazovsky, and Newland (1983) view work alienation as a reflection of the employee's disappointment about his/her status within the organization whereas Blauner (1964) argues that it is the provision of conditions such as an individual's autonomy, responsibility, social interaction, and self-realization, which put forth his/her value as a human (as cited in Elma, 2003). In general, estrangement from work may be defined in relation to an individual finding work-related developments meaningless due to organizational and environmental conditions, feeling one's self to be inefficiencient and powerless, isolating one's self from the work place and colleagues, and as a result, developing negative attitudes towards work (Elma, 2003).

Başaran (2008) states that an employee's estrangement from the organization is the most unwanted of his/her attitudes towards the organization. Başaran, who says that Karl Marx was the first to have used work alienation, defines it as an employee's view of their work as unrelated to his/her efforts.

Although there are many studies on alienation, Seeman's (1959) dimensions developed about alienation are used in empirical research. Aalienation from the perspective of the psychology of a person in society and put forth its dimensions as powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, and self-estrangement (Seeman, 1959).

Powerlessness: Is an employee's loss of control over their circumstances, and their feeling that these circumstances do not reflect themselves (Başaran, 2008). It is an employee's impression that things are out of his/her control (Seeman, 1959). This may occur when individuals cannot and will not be able to materialize what they want in the immediate future (San, 2003). Zielinski and Hoy (1983 as cited in Elma, 2003) define powerlessness as teachers feeling that they do not make a difference in their students' academic attitudes and achievements, and it also states that a teacher's impression of uselessness due to not participating in the decision making process will draw them to powerlessness.

Meaninglessness: The employee considers events around them to be meaningless. They get the feeling that they're excluded from activities in the organization and they regard themselves as isolated from the environment. Employees with such feelings misinterpret the activities and events around them (Başaran, 2008). Teachers in this situation state that they are tired of explaining the same subjects, that the teaching becomes monotonous, and that the taught material is meaningless, without importance (Elma, 2003). Minibaş (1993) states the solution for such alienation is as follows: Administrators should notice and appreciate the employees, end any uncertainty in the teachers' roles, resolve conflict among roles, and alleviate any overload in their roles.

Normlessness: This is when the individual feels that the rules and principles imposed by society are meaningless. In that case, the individual turns to methods and behaviors not supported by society (Başaran, 2008; Ofluoğlu, 2008). This may stem from inefficiency, multitude and conflict among the rules (San, 2003).

Self-estrangement: This is when the individual feels as if s/he was a stranger (San, 2003). The individual views his/her behaviors as those of outside and not his/her behaviors, and s/he isolates themselves. There is no internal motivation and the individual becomes a robot (Başaran, 2008; San, 2003).

The Relationship between QWL and Work Alienation

The high-level of industrialization and technology prevailing in all walks of life bring about alienation for people. Davis and Trist (1974) stated that if QWL was improved, work alienation by the employees would be reduced. In Japan, QWL was viewed in relation to high quality and low cost. As the Z theory of Ouchi, QWL was incorporated into Japanese management applications in the form of quality circles (Cummings & Worley, 1997).

When the literature on QWL is reviewed, it is observed that there aretwo views of action. The first involves QWL as a means to increase efficiency in work and organization whereas the second involves QWL in relation to employees, their wishes, needs, and expectations. Autonomous group works are an example of the first. Autonomous group works have been studied as a QWL condition for increasing efficiency in work (Cummings, 1977). Particularly, autonomous group studies by Trist and Bamfort (1951, as cited in Cummings, 1977), who worked for Tavistock Human Relations Institute, on mine workers may be given as an example of the first kind of studies in this field. In these studies, autonomous work groups were formed in order to increase work efficiency. Jobs and operations of the organization were reorganized, and machines were adapted to the employees. Consequently, some increase in work efficiency was obtained. At the same time, however, even though limited, some factors improving the QWL were obtained. Some examples of this are employee autonomy, self-problem solving, and technical structures adapted for employees.

The second type of action is about the need to improve work life as opposed to the forgotten human dimension related to work alienation and the damage done by prioritizing technology before people. This may be exemplified by Walton's (1972) study on employee alienation. According to this study, as the QWL is improved, employees will not be alienated, skip or neglect work, nor often become sick. The efficiency within an organization becomes increased. Liam Gorman and Edmond S. Molloy's (1972) studies on work enrichment, and J. E. Bragg and I. R. Andrews' (1973) study on participation in management (firsts in the field) may be presented as examples of this.

Davis and Trist (1974) state that QWL focuses on the forgotten, humiliated and alienated human suffering from technology and it attempts to have technology adapt to humans, not the other way around. Thus, QWL seeks to serve the organization through changes in the work environment and through more humane working conditions that meet employees' interests, needs, and expectations (Suzanne, Kerkstra, Van Der Zee, & Abu-Saad, 2001).

Although in Turkey there have been studies on QWL and organizational loyalty (Erdem, 2008), QWL and organizational values (Taşdan&Erdem, 2010), QWL and motivation (Kılıç&Keklik, 2012), and alienation and job satisfaction (Parsak, 2010), no study on QWL predicting the level of work alienation has been conducted. The importance of this study does not depend on whether a study on the same topic has been conducted or not although it may indicate originality. When QWL is considered in relation to employees who feel alienated from work, the extent to which QWL and work alienation predict each other becomes an important question. Thus, the current research may be considered as an important and original study.

Purpose

The current research aims to evaluate the level of elementary school teachers' quality of work life (QWL) to predict work alienation. Below, questions were answered for the purposes of the current study.

i.   What are elementary school teachers' QWL and work alienation in their sub-dimensions?

ii. Do QWL sub-dimensions and work alienation sub-dimensions significantly differ based on gender, subject matter, marital status, and seniority?

iii. To what extent do QWL sub-dimensions predict work alienation sub-dimensions?

Method

The current study was designed using a relational survey model because it focuses on the relation between teachers' QWL and work alienation.

Population and Sample

The research population consisted of the 2387 teachers employed at 58 public elementary schools within the city of Van during the academic year 2010-2011 and the target population included 1096 teachers. Considering the difficulty of reaching out to all teachers, the researcher selected a sample of the target population. Group sampling method, a probability-based sampling method, was used in the current study. In the group sampling method, groups or clusters are formed by putting similar units together. Samples are selected through basic, unbiased sampling (Balcı, 1997; Ural &Kılıç, 2011). First, the schools were considered and then grouped in relation to the number of teachers. An increase of 10 teachers in schools was regarded as a group. Seven groups were formed in the target population. Three schools within each group were selected through a basic random method. Because the number of teachers was smaller in the first, second, third, and fourth groups, 4 schools were selected. The number of sample teachers from each group was determined by its ratio to the target population.

For different sizes of populations, theoretical sample sizes may be within the 95% tolerance level: sampling required for a 5% error margin in a population of 5000 was found to be 356 people (Balci, 1997). However, considering the return rate and mistakes in filling out, it was considered wise to send the schools 418 scales. 25 schools were included in the sample and 418 teachers in these schools were sent scales. 359 scales were returned. 13 scales were not included in the evaluation because they were incomplete or inaccurately filled out. For research purposes, 346 scales in total were included. 45% of the participating teachers were female and 55% were male. 54% of the teachers were classroom teachers whereas 45% were subject-matter teachers. 29% of the participating teachers were single and 68% were married. 37% of the participating teachers had 1 to 5 years of seniority, 25% had 6 to 10 years experience, 18% had 11 to 15 years experience, and 14% had 16 years or more of experience.

Data Collection Tools

QWL Scale developed by Erdem (2008) in order to measure teachers' quality of work life and Work Alienation Scale developed by Elma (2003) in order to measure teachers' work alienation were used. In addition, the Personal Information Form was developed in order to obtain information about teachers' professional characteristics and some features of their profession.

Because the QWL Scale developed by Erdem (2008) focused on high school teachers, factor analysis was re-conducted for elementary teachers. The scale consisted of seven sub-dimensions. Each dimension was considered an independent sub-scale. When the KMO and Bartlett test was examined, it was observed that the lowest value was .74 and the highest value was .90, which was good for the sample group, and the items had .43 for the lowest and .86 for the highest factor load values. The variance percentages of the sub-dimensions were as follows: total area of life with 56%, safe and healthy working conditions with 52%, development of employee capacity with 56%, social responsibility with 49%, social integration with 61%, democratic environment with 58%, and appropriate and fair compensation with 61%. The alpha internalconsistency coefficient calculated for the scale was .74 on the lowest and .89 on the highest.

The Work Alienation Scale developed by Elma (2003) for elementary school teachers consisted of the following sub-dimensions: powerlessness, isolation, and alienation from school. The scale whose validity and reliability as calculated by Elma had the following factor load values: .37 on the lowest and .75 on the highest. The sub-dimension of powerlessness explains 12.6% of the variance,

with meaninglessness explaining 11.7%, isolation explaining 10.7% and alienation from school explaining 7.4%, resulting in a total of 42.4%. The alpha internal consistency coefficient calculated for scale reliability had the following values: .86 for the powerlessness sub-dimension, .84 for the meaninglessness, .80 for the isolation, and .62 for the alienation from school sub-dimensions. These values show that the Work Alienation Scale is very reliable.

The scores of the statements on the QWL scale were defined as follows: 1–1.79 with "I disagree", 1.80–2.59 with "I slightly agree", 2.60–3.39 with "I moderately agree", 3.40–4.19 with "I mostly agree", and 4.20–5.00 with "I strongly agree". Scores of some statements on the Work Alienation scale were defined as follows: 1-1.79 with "I never agree", 1.80-2.59 with "I rarely agree", 2.60-3.39 with "I sometimes agree", 3.40-4.19 with "I often agree", 4.20-5.00 with "I always agree".

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for the research was collected by the researcher. For the analysis of personal information, percentage and frequency was determined, and for the analysis of items on the QWL and work alienation scales, arithmetic averages and standard deviations were found. The T-test was used in order to find whether there was a significant difference between teachers' views on subject-matter, and a one-way variance analysis was used in order to find whether there was a significant difference between teachers' views on seniority. The Tukey HSD test was used in order to define the source of the difference.

In order to find out whether QWL dimensions were valid predictors of work alienation dimensions, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted. In the Multiple Regression model, stepwise selection was implemented. The Durbin-Watson test used in the research showed whether there was an auto-correlation within the model. Often a Durbin-Watson test value of 1.5-2.5 indicates no auto-correlation (Kalaycı, 2005).

Findings

Descriptive Findings on QWL and Alienation from School Sub-Dimensions

Within the QWL sub-dimensions, teachers mostly agreed on the democratic environment ($\overline{X}$ =3.90) and they disagreed the most on the appropriate and fair compensation sub-dimension ($\overline{X}$ =2.48). Teachers stated that they mostly agreed on the democratic environment ($\overline{X}$ =3.90) and social integration (3.69) sub-dimensions; they moderately agreed on the social responsibility ($\overline{X}$ =3.35), total area of life ($\overline{X}$ =3.31), improvement of employee capacity ($\overline{X}$ =3.27), and safe and healthy working conditions ($\overline{X}$ =3.08); and they hardly agreed on the sub-dimension of appropriate and fair compensation ($\overline{X}$ =2.48).

Within the work alienation sub-dimensions, teachers mostly agreed on the alienation from school ($\overline{X}$ =2.77) whereas they agreed on the meaninglessness sub-dimension ($\overline{X}$ =1.77) the least. Teachers stated that they sometimes agreed on the alienation from school ($\overline{X}$ =2.77) sub-dimension whereas they rarely agreed on the isolation sub-dimensions ($\overline{X}$ =1.84) and they never agreed on the meaninglessness ($\overline{X}$ =3.35) sub-dimension. In total, they rarely agreed on the alienation ($\overline{X}$ =2.11).

Findings Associated with the Variables

There seems to be a significant difference in gender only in the total area of life sub-dimension of QWL [$t_{(342)}$=2.15; $p<.05$]. No significant difference in gender was found in the other sub-dimensions. As such, female teachers ($\overline{X}$ =13.6) more than male teachers ($\overline{X}$ =12.93) agreed that their total area of life is good.

A significant difference between gender and the powerlessness, meaninglessness, and isolation sub-dimensions of work alienation was found ($p<.05$). Within the powerlessness, meaninglessness, and isolation sub-dimensions, female teachers stated that they more often felt powerless, meaningless, and isolated compared to the male teachers. As such, within the powerlessness sub-dimension, female teachers ($\overline{X}$ =22.07) stated that they felt powerless more often than male teachers ($\overline{X}$ =24.08) did [$t_{(342)}$ = -2.61; $p<.05$]. Within the meaninglessness sub-dimension, female teachers ($\overline{X}$ =17.77) stated that they felt meaningless more often than male teachers ($\overline{X}$ =20.88) did [$t_{(342)}$ =-3.57; $p<.05$]. Within the isolation sub-dimension, female teachers ($\overline{X}$ =17.42) stated that they felt isolated more often than male teachers ($\overline{X}$ =19.17) did [$t_{(342)}$ =-2.30; $p<.05$].

In relation to the subject-matter variable, there was a significant difference only with the appropriate and fair compensation sub-dimension of QWL [$t_{(342)}$ =-2.55; $p<.05$]. Thus, classroom teachers ($\overline{X}$ =16.59), compared to the subject-matter

teachers ($\overline{X}$ =18.26), agreed less that they received appropriate and fair compensation.

In relation to the marital status, there was a significant difference only in total area of life sub-dimension of QWL [t$_{(342)}$=-2.25; p<.05]. As such, single teachers ($\overline{X}$ =12.72), compared to the married teachers ($\overline{X}$ =13.49), agreed less that their total area of life was good.

In relation to seniority, there was a significant difference in the sub-dimension of the improvement of employee capacity (F$_{(3,321)}$=2.864; p<.05). According to the Tukey HSD test conducted to discover the source of the difference, teachers in the 6-to-10-year seniority group ($\overline{X}$ =18.51) agreed less that employee capacity in their schools was improved, compared with the teachers in 11-to-15 ($\overline{X}$ =20.47) and 16-and-beyond ($\overline{X}$ =20.42) seniority groups.

Findings on QWL Sub-dimensions Predicting Work Alienation Sub-dimensions

Powerlessness Sub-dimension: A significant relationship between the powerlessness sub-dimension of work alienation and the social integration, total area of life, safe and healthy working conditions, democratic environment, appropriate and fair compensation sub-dimension values of QWL was observed (F$_{(5,340)}$=123.691; p<.001). Social integration, total area of life, safe and healthy working conditions, democratic environment, and appropriate and fair compensation values were respectively included in the model. Social integration, total area of life, safe and healthy working conditions, democratic environment, and appropriate and fair compensation values explain 37.3% of the powerlessness sub-dimension. The t-test (t$_{(2,426)}$=-25.385 p<.001) showed a significant relationship individually between social integration, total area of life, safe and healthy working conditions, democratic environment, appropriate and fair compensation, and the powerlessness sub-dimension.

The constant in the model was 51.228. Coefficient (B) values show that a one-unit increase in total area of life leads to a 56% decrease in the powerlessness sub-dimension. Similarly, a one-unit increase in social integration leads to a 36% decrease; a one-unit increase in democratic environment leads to a 29% decrease; a one-unit increase in safe and healthy working conditions leads to a 21% decrease; and a one-unit increase in appropriate and fair compensation leads to an 11% decrease in powerlessness sub-dimension.

When the standardized regression coefficient (Beta value) is examined, the order of significance of predicting variables on powerlessness shows as follows: total area of life, democratic environment, social integration, safe and healthy working conditions, and appropriate and fair compensation.

A negative relationship is observed between the sub-dimensions of QWL and the powerlessness sub-dimension when partial correlations are examined. Whereas a moderate negative relationship is observed between the social integration, included first in the model, and powerlessness, a negative but lower relationship (r=-.51) is observed between the powerlessness sub-dimension and the variables when all variables are included in the model. Accordingly, a low, negative relationship was observed between social integration (r=-.12), total area of life (r=-.25), safe and healthy working conditions (r=-.15), democratic environment (r=-.13), appropriate and fair compensation (r=-.10) and the powerlessness sub-dimension.

Meaninglessness Sub-dimension: A significant relationship is observed between meaninglessness and the democratic environment and total area of life (F$_{(2,343)}$ = 42.612; p<.001). This indicates that the model as a whole is significant on all levels. Firstly the democratic environment and then total area of life values were included in the model. When the democratic environment and total area of life are taken into account together, they explain 19.4% of the model (adjusted R$_d^2$). Democratic environment and total area of life explain 19.4% of meaninglessness. When the t-test is examined, it is observed that the democratic environment (t=-6.342; p=.000) and total area of life (t=-4.239; p=.000) are significant predictors on meaninglessness.

The constant value in the model is 42.983. When the coefficient (B) values are taken into account, it is observed that a one-unit increase in the total area of life leads to a 61% decrease on meaninglessness whereas a one-unit increase in democratic environment leads to a 56% decrease in meaninglessness.

When partial correlations are considered, a low negative relationship is observed between the variables and the meaninglessness sub-dimension. A low negative relationship between the democratic environment (r=-.32), total area of life (r=-.22), and the meaninglessness sub-dimension is also observed.

Isolation Sub-dimension: It is observed that isolation, democratic environment, and social integration values have a significant relationship (F $_{(2,343)}$ =107.97; p<.001). This indicates that the model as a whole is significant on all levels. First the democratic environment then social integration was included in the model. When democratic environment and social integration are taken into account together, this explains 25.4% (adjusted R$_d^2$) of the model. The democratic environment and social integration explain 25.4% of isolation. When the t-test is examined, democratic environment (t=-3.58; p=.000) and social integration (t=-2.96; p=.000) are observed to be significant predictors on isolation.

The constant value within the model is 39.00. When coefficient (B) values are examined, it is observed that a one-unit increase in democratic environment leads to a 43.3% decrease on isolation whereas a one-unit increase in social integration leads to a 47.5% decrease in isolation.

When partial correlations are examined, a low negative relationship between the variables and isolation is observed. When partial correlations of the two variables are taken into account, a low-level negative relationship between the democratic environment (r=-.19), social integration (r=-.16), and the isolation sub-dimension is observed.

Alienation from School Sub-dimension: It is observed that there is a significant relationship between alienation from school and the social integration value (F $_{(1,344)}$ =15.803 p<.01). Only the social integration value was included in the model. The social integration value explains 4% of the model (adjusted R$_d^2$). Namely, social integration explains 4% of alienation from school. When the t-test is examined, it is observed that social integration (t=-3.975; p<.001) is a significant predictor of alienation from school.

The constant value in the model is 24.544. When the coefficient (B) values are considered, a one-unit increase in social integration leads to a 21% decrease in alienation from school. When the correlation is considered, a low-level negative relationship (r=-.21) between social integration and alienation from school is observed.

Conclusion and Discussion

Whereas teachers stated that there are mostly democratic environments and social integration in schools, they said that schools moderately fulfill their social responsibility, improve employee capacity, provide safe and healthy working conditions, appropriate and fair compensation, and teachers are happy about all of their lives. Also in Erdem's (2008) research, high school teachers stated views that are parallel to the results of the current research. However, the high school teachers mostly stated that they were happy about their lives whereas they agreed less that they received appropriate and fair compensation. On the other hand, in both studies, it is commendable that teachers mostly agreed that there were democratic environments in schools because it was revealed through research that undemocratic administrations in schools lead to teacher alienation from school (Vavrus, 1989; Johnson & Ellett, 1992 as cited in Erjem, 2005). In Erjem's (2005) study, however, teachers did not put forward a positive view of participating in the administration, and they stated that they did not believe in the importance of participation in administration. In chronological order, teachers in Özdemir's (1986), Özdayı's (1990), Özpolat's (2002), Erdem's (2008), and Taşdan and Erdem's (2010) studies agreed the least that they received appropriate and fair compensation. In the current research, on the other hand, teachers stated that they moderately agreed about receiving appropriate and fair compensation. This may result from the recent rise, even though inadequate, in teacher compensation and the improvements in their health benefits.

The current research showed low-level work alienation. Teachers rarely stated that they felt alienated from work. In parallel with these results, Aksu and Güneri (2011), Hoşgörür (1997) and Çalışır's (2006) studies revealed that education employees rarely felt alienated from work. However, Şimşek, Balay, and Şimşek's (2012) research on work alienation showed that classroom teachers felt moderately alienated from work.

Teachers stated that they felt the alienation from school and powerlessness sub-dimensions the most, and they felt the meaninglessness and isolation sub-dimensions the least. Teachers, stating that they sometimes felt alienated from school, said that they rarely felt powerless and isolated, and never felt that their work was meaningless for them. These findings are significant in terms of revealing that teachers never or rarely ever had work alienation feelings. Çalışır (2006) had similar findings. In his study on elementary school teachers, Çalışır showed that teachers sometimes felt alienated from school, rarely felt powerless, but never felt meaningless and isolated. Also in parallel with this research, teachers

in Elma's (2003) findings stated that they felt the alienation from school and powerlessness sub-dimensions the strongest. Within the quantitative study that Erjem (2005) conducted on high school teachers, the teachers' most-experienced feeling of alienation was the powerlessness sub-dimension.

With regard to the gender variable, female teachers stated that they had better areas of life, compared to that of male teachers. Similarly, in Erdem's (2009) findings, female teachers in high schools stated that they had better total area of life, compared to male teachers. This may indicate that women have more optimistic views of life. In addition, women's obtained economic independence may play some role in their stating that they had better total area of life. Female teachers stated that they more often felt powerless, meaningless, and isolated, compared to male teachers. Unlike the current study, Elma's (2003) findings did not reveal a significant difference with the gender variable in the powerlessness, meaninglessness, and isolation sub-dimensions. With regard to marital status, married teachers, compared to single teachers, stated that they had a better total area of life. This may stem from married teachers' more organized home life, the help that they receive from their spouses and children, and their ability to share problems and happiness with spouses and children.

With regard to work alienation in relation to marital status, Elma (2003) found more alienation feelings in single teachers whereas Şimşek et al.'s (2012) study revealed no significant difference between married and single teachers' general work alienation findings. However, Şimşek et al. found significant difference in the isolation and normlessness sub-dimensions. Whereas in the isolation sub-dimension, single teachers said that they more often felt isolated, with the normlessness sub-dimension, married teachers stated that they more often found themselves not living up to the norms.

Regarding the subject-matter variable, less classroom teachers than subject-matter teachers stated that they received appropriate and fair compensation. Although in Çalışır's (2006) findings on work alienation in relation to the subject-matter variable (subject-matter teachers stated that they had higher levels of work alienation and more often felt powerless compared to classroom teachers), the current study found no significant difference.

As far as the seniority groups, teachers in the 6 to 10 year seniority group less agreed that the employee capacity in their schools was improved compared to teachers in the 11 to 15-year and 16+ year seniority groups. This is contrary to expectations. In fact, teachers in the 1 to 5 year seniority group, compared to teachers in other seniority groups, were expected to agree more that employee capacity in their schools was improved. Maybe in 6 to 10 years, a teacher could not get what they expected, but this should not cause a difference in the higher level seniority groups. The 6 to 10 year period may be when the decision to stay in the profession is emphasized. Therefore, these years of seniority may be viewed as the time when schools are questioned as to how they contribute to a teacher's professional development.

There is a significant negative relationship between the powerlessness sub-dimension of work alienation and social integration, total area of life, safe and healthy working conditions, democratic environment, and the appropriate and fair compensation sub-dimensions of QWL. Whereas there is a moderate and near-moderate negative relationship between social integration, total area of life, safe and healthy working conditions, democratic environment, and appropriate and fair compensation and the powerlessness sub-dimension, a low-level negative relationship is observed with appropriate and fair compensation. Within the model, the powerlessness sub-dimension was mostly explained by social integration, total area of life, safe and healthy working conditions, democratic environment, and appropriate and fair compensation. Five sub-dimensions together explained 37.3% of the powerlessness sub-dimension. Accordingly, a one-unit increase in teachers' total area of life leads to a 56% decrease in teachers' feelings of powerlessness. A one-unit increase in teachers' social integration in schools leads to a 36% decrease. A one-unit increase in the democratic environment in teachers' schools leads to a 29% decrease. A one-unit increase in teachers' safe and healthy working conditions leads to a 21% decrease. Lastly, a one-unit increase in the appropriate and fair compensation sub-dimension leads to an 11% decrease.

A significant negative relationship is observed between the meaninglessness sub-dimension of work alienation and the democratic environment and total area of life sub-dimensions of QWL. Democratic environment and total area of life together explain 19.4% of the meaninglessness sub-dimension. Both democratic environment and total area of life are significant predictors of meaninglessness. Accordingly, a one-unit increase in teachers' total area of life leads to 61% decrease in their feelings of meaninglessness whereas a one-

unit increase in the democratic environment in school leads to 56% decrease in their feelings of meaninglessness.

There is a near-moderate negative significant relationship between the isolation sub-dimension of work alienation and the democratic environment and social integration sub-dimensions of QWL. Democratic environment and social integration together explain 25% of the model. Both democratic environment and social integration are significant predictors of isolation. A one-unit increase in the democratic environment in schools leads to a 43% decrease in a teacher's feelings of isolation whereas a one-unit increase in the social integration in schools leads to a 48% decrease in their feelings of isolation.

There is significant, negative, low-level relationship between the alienation from school sub-dimension of work alienation and the social integration sub-dimension of QWL. A one-unit increase in the social integration in schools leads to a 21% decrease in teachers' alienation from school.

As revealed by Davis and Trist's (1974) studies on coal facilities, an improvement in QWL has a significant role in reducing teachers' alienation. The current research revealed a significant relationship between the QWL sub-dimensions of social integration, total area of life, safe and healthy working conditions, democratic environment, and appropriate and fair compensation, and the work alienation sub-dimensions of powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, and alienation from school. Teachers feel less powerless when their total area of life is improved, democratic environment at schools is developed, and social integration and the required safe and healthy working conditions are provided. Developing a democratic environment at schools reduces teachers' feelings of meaninglessness and isolation. Similarly, improving social integration at schools reduces teachers' feelings of alienation from school.

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