

## Teachers' Perceptions of Learning School Conception

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine primary school teachers' perceptions of learning school conception. The universe of the study carried out using survey consists of 2435 teachers working in 78 schools in central district of Elazığ province during 2009-2010 academic year. The sample of the research constitutes 780 teachers working at 20 schools who were chosen by simple random sampling method. According to the research findings, in not any dimension, are teachers' perceptions of learning school conception at "always" level. Teachers of Visual Arts have higher level of perceptions of learning school conception compared to the other branches of teachers'. The dimension perceived at the lowest level is shared vision and culture dimension.

**Keywords:** Learning Organization, Learning School, Organizational Learning, Primary School, Shared Vision.

### Introduction

Learning, at the same time, is both a process and a value. Ideally, no matter what rank he has or how long his tenure is, each individual dedicates himself to being better than the previous day through learning. The institution, through learning how to learn, continuously tries hard to improve itself, its products, and services in every aspect. Among the characteristics of learning organizations, there exist some features such as the integration of learning into everything what people have done, learning being a process rather than a momentary event, cooperation underpinning all relationships, that while developing themselves, individuals change the institution as well, that employees educate the institution in terms of effectiveness, upgrading the quality and innovations (Brahan, 1998:9).

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The underlying principle of learning is the ability to cope with the change by changing human being himself. Thanks to learning, we start to do the thing we have not done before. Learning to come into existence, at first, there has to be knowledge in hand. Learning is a process that individuals gain new knowledge and insights to create changes in their actions and behaviours (Marquardt, M. & Reynolds, A., 1994:35). Today, there is a rapid change in many areas. In the face of this change, so as to accord with it, many businesses and other institutions try to provide the acquisition of habits to act as a body in terms of furnishing human resource with some certain knowledge and skills, keeping the existence of a healthy learning environment and overcoming possible difficulties (Grey, C., & Antonacopoulou, E., 2004:1-25). The capacity of change and improvement has become settled via intensive organizational learning. To adapt to the conditions emerging in a sudden manner, organizations have to transfer what they have learned and acquired from their experiences to entire organization (Snyder & Cummings, 1998:873).

The realization of school learning is possible with team players. The effort that an individual show to co-operate and contribute is important for organization. School learning includes commitment to continuous learning supported by group activities (Salner, 1999:489).

Organizations as basis are the community describing the principles, creating structures, processing the sources and functioning to reach the desired end in accordance with individual and collective values and needs. In the school described as organization of human service, one of the desired ends is to help people learn (Millikan 1989:172-173; Davidoff and Lazarus, 2003:6).

In recent years, "learning organization" term has become a widely used term by institutions and environments being interested in organizational structure. One of the people having a voice in learning organizations respect is Peter M. Senge, System Thought and Organizational Learning Program manager in Sloan School of Management of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In his book, "*The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization*", he gives vital and explicit information about this subject.

Learning school means to be open to innovation. For this reason, an innovation circle must be created at school. Learning school must co-operate with the other schools and institutions and keep the innovation work active all the time (Balcı, 1996). Başaran (1999) lists to do list of a learning school, stating that an organization of people will reach up to sum that its employees can learn: 1. Tries to know itself 2. Collects information 3. Thinks jointly 4. Employs the idea. As stated above; for a school to look ahead securely, it is only possible by establishing a learning organization structure. Becoming learning organizations of schools depends on the staff consisting of people learning continuously, developing themselves, being open and willing to learn.

Schools are service organizations dedicated to teaching and learning. The ultimate goal of school is student learning. In fact, the presence of school is organized on this service. Schools have to be more learning organizations than all the other organizations are (Senge, 1990; Watkins ve Marsick, 1993; Aypay, 2010). Schools are the places where new patterns of thinking are encouraged, common dreams are fed, participants try hard to achieve common goals through joint commitment, they develop continuous and productive ways to achieve these goals (Leithwood ve Louis, 1998; Aypay, 2010:33).

In the society, to adapt to growing knowledge, as those who work in the organizations learn how to learn, organizations have to be learning organizations as well. In this context, each school wanting to perform its mission is to make learning organization philosophy as its principle. Learning organization is the one which expands its capacity of creating the future progressively. This learning is important for the organization to survive and adapt (Bozkurt, 2003). Besides the aim to adapt organization's environmental changes, another aim is that workers to renew themselves continuously as well (Çelik, 2000).

Senge (2002) listed five basic features of learning organization as the system thought, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning. These five basic features are defined as learning disciplines. The system thought being a conceptual framework, a collection of information and tools, enables us to see the whole story of events clearly and help us see how we may change them in the most effective way. The personal mastery is the discipline to see the reality objectively, develop patience, focus our

energies, gain clarity to our personal horizon continuously, and deepen it. Mental models affect our actions and conception of world as assumptions rooted roundly in our minds, generalizations, even pictures and images. Application of shared vision includes the ability to reveal the pictures shared for the future. The discipline of team learning starts with dialogue; this is the capacity of a team to take action for real “thinking together” suspending assumptions of the individuals. Organizational learning at school is a condition imposed by school culture (Özdemir, 2000). Teacher has to be an expert in the field what his students know, can learn and how learning can occur. It is highly important how teachers shape their students’ learning (Nuthall, 2004). “Critical thinking”, “problem solving”, “decision making” are considered as the skills that 21. Century-individuals are expected to have. This three skills being among cognitive skills are basic skills for “learning to learn”. “Learning to learn” is indispensable for individual, social and economic success in information societies (Scans, 1991; Doyle, 1994:211). Learning to learn, in a sense, is the kind of arrangement and re-interpretation of what we have learned. To look at what we have learned from a new perspective means to filter what we have learned so far and to create infrastructure to what we will learn from now on. Learning to learn is considered as the key to success in the information age and life-long learning (Doyle, 1994).

The need for the teacher generation aiming to create learners instead of teaching for students, helping students be independent (the learners to learn), providing interest and motivation to life-long learning for their students, encouraging them to become autonomous learners is the primary element of education of future (Szucs, 2009). Being a learning organization is to accept the team attitudes, values and practices that support continuous learning process within the organization (Progress International, 2010).

Effective learning culture is a culture school staff like to learn; are willing and active to their own learning; participating in learning activities and working collaboratively to create learning society (Hawk, 2000:7). Current situation requires manifesting to create learning teacher, in other words, learning school. It is thought that the finding of teachers’ perceptual differences between learning school perception and teachers will contribute to

create learning organization efforts. In this study, finding teachers' perceptions of learning school conception, in the light of results, how those will contribute to development and improvement of the school have been investigated.

### **The Problem Sentence**

The purpose of this study is to determine primary school teachers' perceptions of learning school conception. The following sub-problems were formed to answer the question in research problem.

1. What are primary school teachers' perceptions of learning school conception on the basis of dimensions? Is there any difference between the dimensions?
2. Do primary school teachers' perceptions of learning school conception vary in terms of branch, gender, seniority variables?

### **Method**

This research aiming to determine the perceptions of primary school teachers working for National Ministry of Education towards learning school conception is a survey model research. Survey models aim to describe a situation in the past or in the present as it is.

#### **Universe and Sample**

The universe of the research constitutes 2435 teachers working in 78 formal schools in central district of Elazığ province during 2009-2010 academic years. The sample of the research constitutes approximately 780 form and branch teachers who were randomly selected working in 20 schools. School staff disproportionate sampling technique was determined by 20 selected. In this technique, all elements in the universe has the equal chance of being selected (Karasar, 2009:113). To determine the sample size, Anderson's (1990) sample size determination formula was utilized (Akt: Balcı, 2009:92) and it is stated in the table that there have to be 356 people in the 5000-people-universe according to 0.5 tolerance level. The sample of research consists of 407/704 (57.8 %) teachers as a result of

extracting inappropriate questionnaires applied, losses during the application and being on leave of absence and on sick leave.

### **Data Collection Tool**

The data of the research, being prepared via scan of literature by the researcher. The scale consists of 50 Likert-type items answered as “Never” (1), “Rarely” (2), “Sometimes” (3), “Often” (4), “Always” (5). The scale ranges are 4/5: .80. Error margin of the research is .05. The scale is composed of four dimensions such as “Learning as a Team”, “Enhancement of Employees”, “Shared Vision and Culture”, “Open Management”. Total score of the scale of respondents indicates the level of teachers’ views about the learning school conception. While high score respondents get from each factor shows high sense of learning school conception, low score shows a low sense of learning school conception. The scale was applied to 109 teachers and validity and reliability analyses were conducted after preliminary application. As a result of first factor analysis, out of 50 items 14 items of which factor loading were less than 30 were removed from the scale. In the second process, 8 items being below the same rate were thrown out. Then, the same process was repeated for the third time and after discarding 4 items being the below the same rate, the remaining 24 items were constructed in the form of a scale consisting four factors. Rotated factor load values were detected between 0.36 and 0.76. Factor analysis is a statistical technique aiming to clarify with a small number of factors to measure by gathering the variables which measure same structure or the quality (Büyüköztürk, 2009:123). Whether the data is suitable for factor analysis or not was tested with KMO and Barlett tests. The KMO value of the data is 262 and Bartlett value is 1,982E3, df: 325, p: .000. According to these results, the data was determined to be suitable for factor analysis. According to factor analysis, scale is four-dimensional. There are seven items in learning as a team dimension and of this dimension the Cronbach Alfa reliability coefficient is .82. There are eight items in enhancement of employees dimension and Cronbach Alfa reliability coefficient belonging to this dimension is .79. In the dimension of shared vision and culture, there are five items and the Cronbach Alfa reliability coefficient of this dimension is .80. There are five items in open management dimension and Cranbach Alfa reliability

coefficient of this dimension is .75. The total variance of all scale is 51,426% and Cronbach Alfa reliability coefficient is .82.

### **Data Analysis**

The developed scale consists of two parts. In the first part, there are 3 items to determine teachers' personal information who have participated in the study, in the second part, there are 25 items to measure teachers' perceptions of learning school conception. The data were analyzed via SPSS 16.0 package program. In the analysis of research questions, to determine teachers' perceptions of learning school conception, besides frequency and percentages, arithmetic means and standard deviations, as well as T test and Variance Analysis (One-way ANOVA) were conducted.

### **Findings and Interpretation**

According to findings of the research, 64,9% of teachers surveyed are of Social Sciences, 25,3 Sciences, and 9,8% Visual Arts; 49,4% of teachers are female and 50,6% male teachers. In terms of seniority variable, it is seen that 5, 7% of them 1-5 years, 26, 3% of them 6-10 years, 21, 4% 11-15 years, 29, 7% 16-20 years and 17, 0% of them have 21 years and above seniority.

### **Findings Concerning Dimensions in the Measurement Tool Used in the Research**

As a result of the research, in general, it was determined that teachers' perceptions of dimensions of learning school are at "often" (high) level in the dimensions of "learning as a team" ( $\bar{x}=3, 42$ ), "enhancement of employees" ( $\bar{x}=3, 43$ ) and "open management" ( $\bar{x}=3, 42$ ); and in the dimension of "shared vision and culture" ( $\bar{x}=3, 36$ ) is at "sometimes" level. It is seen that teachers' perceptions of learning school conception are not at "always" level in any dimensions and that the dimension perceived at the lowest level is "shared vision and culture" dimension.

When teachers' perceptions arithmetic mean values of items in the dimension of learning as a team are analyzed, while teachers' perceptions concerning "There is a conception of learning as a team" ( $\bar{x}=3,52$ ), "I have self confidence while taking on institutional tasks" ( $\bar{x}=3,50$ ), "One of the aims of my desire to learn is to contribute to institutional

improvement" ( $\bar{x}=3,50$ ), "There is a tendency to solve problems ensuring the participation of all members" ( $\bar{x}=3,46$ ), "Team management and team spirit are dominated in the studies" ( $\bar{x}=3,43$ ) are at "often" level, their perceptions of the items "Knowledge is transferred fast and efficiently to the entire organization and shared" ( $\bar{x}=3,38$ ), "Each member of the institution is in the habit of learning and has tendency to learn by taking advantage of gained experiences of himself and others" ( $\bar{x}=3,35$ ) are at "sometimes" level.

When teachers' perceptions arithmetic mean values of items in the dimension of "empowerment of employees" are analyzed, while teachers' perceptions concerning "there is trust between teachers and school administrators" ( $\bar{x}=3,47$ ), "organizational development is fast" ( $\bar{x}=3,43$ ), "New ideas are supported, they are encouraged for errors" ( $\bar{x}=3,43$ ), "Rewarding system in the organization is functional" ( $\bar{x}=3,41$ ), "Management encourages employees' desire to learn" ( $\bar{x}=3,40$ ) are at "often level, their perceptions of the items "I prefer to look at events multidimensional" ( $\bar{x}=3,37$ ), "School Employees are dedicated to their work and make efforts in their jobs" ( $\bar{x}=3,37$ ) and "There is a good working environment" ( $\bar{x}=3,36$ ) are at "sometimes" level.

When teachers' perceptions arithmetic mean values of items in the dimension of "shared vision and culture" are analyzed, while teachers' perceptions concerning "there is career development" ( $\bar{x}=3,41$ ) item are at "often" level, their perceptions of the items "Teachers' training and development needs are determined" ( $\bar{x}=3,39$ ), "The studies carried out to achieve aims of the institution are supported by the management" ( $\bar{x}=3,31$ ), "The school principal listens to teachers problems and meets their needs and demands" ( $\bar{x}=3,36$ ) and "Institution employees are eager to learn" ( $\bar{x}=3,32$ ) are at "sometimes" level.

When teachers' perceptions arithmetic mean values of items in the dimension of "open management" are analyzed, while teachers' perceptions concerning "The Institution members share their ideas with others" ( $\bar{x}=3,58$ ), "The management encourages teamwork" ( $\bar{x}=3,45$ ) and "The management supports teamwork" ( $\bar{x}=3,41$ ) are at "often" level, their perceptions of the items "The Institution members are open to try new

approaches and changes they require" ( $\bar{x}=3,38$ ) and "There is cooperation among employees to achieve the objectives of the school" ( $\bar{x}=3,31$ ) are at "sometimes" level.

**Table 1.** The t-test results concerning diversity of teachers' perceptions of learning school conception dimensions by gender variable

DIMENSIONS	Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	SS	Levene	p	t	P																																		
1. Learning as a Team	Female	201	3,46	,52	1,324	,250	,398	,691																																		
	Male	206	3,44	,57					2. Enhancement of Employees	Female	201	3,46	,54	,420	,234	,649	,517	Male	206	3,41	,70	3. Shared Vision and Culture	Female	201	3,33	,66	,013	,908	-,831	,406	Male	206	3,39	,73	4. Open Management	Female	201	3,40	,58	,620	,432	-,563
2. Enhancement of Employees	Female	201	3,46	,54	,420	,234	,649	,517																																		
	Male	206	3,41	,70					3. Shared Vision and Culture	Female	201	3,33	,66	,013	,908	-,831	,406	Male	206	3,39	,73	4. Open Management	Female	201	3,40	,58	,620	,432	-,563	,574	Male	206	3,43	,75								
3. Shared Vision and Culture	Female	201	3,33	,66	,013	,908	-,831	,406																																		
	Male	206	3,39	,73					4. Open Management	Female	201	3,40	,58	,620	,432	-,563	,574	Male	206	3,43	,75																					
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	Male	206	3,43	,75																																						

As seen in Table 1, as a result of conducted Levene test, teachers' perceptions of learning school conception do not differentiate meaningfully in all dimensions by gender variable.

**Table 2.** One-Way Variance analysis results concerning diversity of teachers' perception concerning learning school conception dimensions by branch variable

ANOVA Results							
DIMENSIONS	The SOURCE of VARIANCE	Sd	KT	KO	F	P	
1. Learning as a Team	Among Groups	2	2,946	1,473	4,988	,007	
	Within the Group	404	119,284	,295			
	Total	406	122,230				
2. Enhancement of Employees	Among Groups	2	5,127	2,563	6,722	,001	
	Within the Group	404	154,055	,381			
	Total	406	159,181				
3. Share Vision and Culture	Among Groups	2	2,984	1,492	3,059	,048	
	Within the Group	404	197,066	,488			
	Total	406	200,051				
4. Open Management	Among Groups	2	1,343	,672	1,469	,231	
	Within the Group	404	184,755	,457			
	Total	406	186,098				

P<,05

As seen in Table 2, as a result of One-Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether teachers' perceptions of learning school conception differ meaningfully in all dimensions by branch variable, it is seen that either the difference between the arithmetic means of "enhancement of employees" and "shared vision and culture" dimensions is meaningful statistically or the distribution of these items is not homogenous.

**Table 3.** One-Way Variance analysis and kruskal wallis h-test results concerning diversity of teachers' perceptions of learning schools conception by branch variable

DIMENSIONS	Branch	N	$\bar{x}$	SS	Levene	p	differ ence
1. Learning as a Team	Social Sciences	264	3,46	,55	,693	,500	2-3
	Science.	103	3,34	,48			
	Visual Arts	40	3,66	,60			
	Total	407	3,45	,54			
2. Enhancement of Employees	Social Sciences.	264	3,43	,55	7,165	,001	3-1,2
	Science.	103	3,33	,48			
	Visual Arts	40	3,75	1,12			
	Total	407	3,43	,62			
3. Shared Vision and Culture	Social Sciences	264	3,31	,64	,735	,480	-
	Science	103	3,40	,80			
	Visual Art	40	3,59	,71			
	Total	407	3,36	,70			
4. Open Management	Social Sciences	264	3,40	,70	,687	,504	-
	Science	103	3,39	,60			
	Visual Arts	40	3,59	,69			
	Total	407	3,42	,67			

As seen in Table 3, after One-Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether teachers' perceptions of learning school conception differ meaningfully by branch variable, the hypothesis whether variances of dimensions are homogeneous was tested with Levene's Test and the "enhancement of employees" variance dimension was determined not to be homogeneous. Thereupon non-parametric Kruskal Wallis H Test was conducted to determine whether teachers' perceptions of the achievement level of competence in teaching differed. According to the sort mean scores obtained from this test, teachers' perceptions of learning school conception were not found meaningful in any dimension.

According to Scheffe test conducted to find the source of difference of teachers' perceptions of learning school conception between branches, the perceptions of teachers of

Visual Arts branch concerning the items in “learning as a team” dimension ( $\bar{x}:3,66$ ) differ meaningfully from the perceptions of teachers in Science branch ( $\bar{x}:3,37$ ). The items concerning tendency to involving in solving the problems team management and team spirit in the work, benefitting from experiences and fast and efficient transfer of knowledge to the entire school of school employees in this dimension may have affected teachers' perceptions of self-confidence, desire, effort and commitment feelings in visual arts branch. Besides this, It can be said that their perceptions of the items in learning as a team dimension are higher than Science teachers' perceptions because of the reasons that the work is done and the needs, requests are met on time, that they have branch and board meetings charred by vice-principal, that they plan the social, sportive and artistic activities which enable them to be close to the administration, that the number of permanent staff at schools is limited to one person in almost every school because of the class hours per week being very few in visual arts branch.

The perceptions of teachers of Visual Arts branch concerning the items in “enhancement of employees” dimension ( $\bar{x}:3, 75$ ) differ meaningfully from the perceptions of teachers in Social Sciences branch ( $\bar{x}:3,43$ ). The Visual Arts teachers' perceptions are at higher level than Science and Social Sciences teachers' perceptions are in terms of items expressed in this dimension such as the dedication of employees to their jobs, making efforts in their jobs , a good working environment, functionality of rewarding system, supporting new ideas, encouragement for errors, encouragement of management for desire to learn, existence of fast organizational development, existence of trust between teachers and school administrators and looking at events multidimensional. As a leader, school administrator's character must be composed of features such as visionary thinking, justice, truth, courage, patience, self-control (Aranson, 2003; Atınok ve Yılmaz, 2009:457). Accordingly, the school administrator's behavior is seen very important. Because if administrators build healthy relationship with his human resources, human resources' job satisfaction, happiness, efforts, successes and their efficient work increase. Teachers are affected even by the words and intonation while school administrators express their own opinions and intentions (Rebore, 2001). Since school administrators' personal

characteristics, knowledge level, experiences, habits may affect this behavior, intention and thoughts, the learning school conception and the climate at school may be affected as well. In this context, since teachers of Visual Arts branch are affected more and school administrators give more importance to enhancement of employees, it can be said that their perceptions are high concerning this dimension compared to of teachers of Social Sciences and Science. In fact, as a result of high number of students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades in a school, because of high number of branches, the number of teachers of Social Sciences and Science is high as well. Therefore, it is expected that they come together more often to have branch and class board meetings and discuss the problems in the branches, that is, they are expected to be more suitable for learning as a team. However, this result shows that cooperation, division of task, and coordination have not been established and, therefore, their perceptions of learning as a team conception is at low level.

Learning behavior in teams is closely related to team performance and psychological safety. To provide psychological safety is possible when a team environment is provided where the individuals in the team feel themselves safe and there is mutual respect. Provision of psychological safety of the team encourages learning behavior in the work groups. Commitment to common purpose, open communication, sharing information, discussing errors, taking feedback, mutual support among team members are important elements that create safety atmosphere (Edmonson, 1999:351-352). Employees working in a positive learning environment see the others not only as a source of information, but as individuals whom they can cooperate with as well. Organizations learn through individuals. Establishment of a link between individual learning and organizational learning is required. Teams provide this requisite link. Teamwork plays role as a converting process in the transfer of individual learning into organization (Çırpan, 2001:30).

**Table 4.** One-Way Variance analysis results concerning diversity of teachers' perception concerning learning school conception dimensions by seniority variable

**ANOVA Results**

DIMENSIONS	The SOURCE of VARIANCE	Sd	KT	KO	F	P
1.Learning as a Team	Among Groups	4	1,456	,364	1,212	,305
	Within the Group	402	120,774	,300		
	Total	406	122,230			
2.Enhancement of Employees	Among Groups	4	2,312	,578	1,481	,207
	Within the Group	402	156,869	,390		
	Total	406	159,181			
3. Shared Vision and Culture	Among Groups	4	,319	,080	,160	,958
	Within the Group	402	199,732	,497		
	Total	406	200,051			
4.Open Management	Among Groups	4	,747	,187	,405	,805
	Within the Group	402	185,351	,461		
	Total	406	186,098			

P<0.05

**Table 5.** One-Way Variance analysis results concerning diversity of teachers' perception concerning learning school conception dimensions by seniority variable

DIMENSIONS	SENIORITY	N	$\bar{x}$	SS	Levene p	Difference
1. Learning as a Team	11-5 years	23	3,39	,71	1,227	,299
	6-10 years	107	3,43	,52		
	11-15 years	87	3,44	,56		
	16-20 years	121	3,41	,51		
	21 years and more	69	3,58	,55		
	Total	407	3,45	,54		
2.Enhancement of Employees	11-5 years	23	3,61	1,51	9,856	,000
	6-10 years	107	3,44	,58		
	11-15 years	87	3,44	,58		
	16-20 years	121	3,34	,46		
	21 years and more	69	3,52	,48		
	Total	407	3,43	,62		
3.Shared Vision and Culture	11-5 years	23	3,31	,85	4,647	,001
	6-10 years	107	3,35	,85		
	11-15 years	87	3,34	,71		
	16-20 years	121	3,36	,54		
	21 years and more	69	3,42	,61		
	Total	407	3,36	,70		
4. Open Management	11-5 years	23	3,27	,81	2,762	,027
	6-10 years	107	3,41	,90		
	11-15 years	87	3,41	,62		
	16-20 years	121	3,41	,52		
	21 years and more	69	3,48	,48		
	Total	407	3,42	,67		

p<.05

As seen in Table 4, as a result of One-Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether teachers' perceptions of learning school conception differ meaningfully by seniority variable, it is seen that the difference between the arithmetic mean of all dimensions is not meaningful statistically.

As seen in Table 5, after One-Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether teachers' perceptions of learning school conception differ meaningfully by seniority variable, the hypothesis whether variances of dimensions are homogeneous was tested with Levene's test and the "enhancement of employees" and "shared vision and culture" variances of dimensions was determined not to be homogeneous. Thereupon non-parametric Kruskal Wallis H Test was conducted to determine whether teachers' perceptions of the achievement level of competence in teaching differed. According to the sort mean scores obtained from this test, teachers' perceptions of learning school conception were not found meaningful in any dimension.

According to Scheffe test conducted to find the source of difference of teachers' perceptions of learning school conception between seniorities, teachers' perceptions of learning school conception were not found meaningful in any dimension. It is seen that while teachers' perceptions of learning school are at "often" level concerning the items "learning as a team" ( $\bar{x}=3,45$ ), "enhancement of employees" ( $\bar{x}=3,43$ ) and "open management" ( $\bar{x}=3,42$ ) in the scale, their perceptions of items concerning "shared vision and culture" ( $\bar{x}=3,36$ ) are at "sometimes" level. The level of teachers' perceptions of learning school is not "always" by seniority variable.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

A large number of definitions have been made for school learning. Some of these include: School learning is the process of research and correction of errors (Argyris ve Schon, 1978). Learning school are competent organizations at crating knowledge and transferring of it and adapting its own behaviour to reflect new knowledge and perspectives (Garvin, 1993). School learning is the capacity of performance improvement based on experience or the

capacity to protect (DiBella, 1996). Learning school is “the definition of skills for continuous improvement, creativity and future success (Wick and Leon, 1995).as humans do, businesses create and collect knowledge through different school learning mechanisms as well. By trial and error, businesses create new methods of standard business and business process by using careful measurement of planned activities, the feedback from customers and generally non-operating environment. This situation is defined as organizational learning (Laudon ve Laudon, 2002:373).

The learning school conception largely depends on internal approach of staff at schools as at all organizations. External coercion such as legal arrangements can never take internal attitudes’ place. For schools, to be learning schools depends on teachers to develop themselves both personally and professionally. In this study, primary school teachers’ perceptions of learning school conception were tried to determine whether these perceptions differ by gender, branch and seniority variables or not. For this purpose, literature scan and Senge’s (1998:15) study who defines five disciplines of learning organization conception as personal mastery and vision, mental models, shared vision, teamwork and system thought were referred.

What is required for the existence of learning in school. According to Probst and Buchel, three basic factors are required for learning to create strategic synergies. The first is the “knowledge”, the basic input of learning process, accurate, meaningful and useful knowledge. The others are “talent” and “desire”, something cannot be taught to people by force, the environments they can learn must be designed and they must have desire, talent and power to learn. Besides these, shared vision, strategies to provide flexibility, attention to environmental factors, technological infrastructure, creativity and different perspectives, in short, an organization to provide opportunity to learn is required (Yazıcı, 2001).

In their studies, Toyman and Göktepe (2010) came to the conclusions that administrations at the universities have to support faculty members more to acquire continuous learning tendency to become learning university, that creating shared vision being one of the disciplines of learning organization is weak in terms of learning discipline, that weakness

of learning as a team derives from not combining personal vision with vision of the institution and personal vision being in the forefront, that the influence of personal effort and products being effective in academic promotion at the academy may hinder learning as a team, that mental model may lessen thanks to project-based partnership, conferences and seminars. These results are consistent with learning as a team and shared vision dimensions used in the research by the author and with the results.

In the changing information-society where competition increases every passing day, organizations have to strive to become learning organizations to be successful. In learning organizations, each individual is responsible for their own learning experience and process. Each employee has to acquire knowledge which will improve himself to increase his efficiency and to contribute more to the organization he works for as well (Kearsley, Marquardt, 1999; Çakır ve Yükseltürk, 2010).

The literature shows school culture and leadership as two key factors which play role in improvement of teachers' learning and professional development at school-level (Hargreaves, 1994; Glattorn, 1995; Day, 1999; Çınkır ve Çetin, 2010:356). On the other hand, the biggest task to become a learning organization is basically appointed to administrators. In a learning organization, the administrators must be unprejudiced, open to criticism, supporter of new ideas. In addition, administrators must try to create an environment where the done work is questioned and knowledge and experiences are shared, learning can easily occur (Teare and Dealtry 1998). So, school principals have an important role in teachers' self development and learning. Teachers are of opinion that the items expressed concerning learning school conception such as that there is conception of learning as a team at school, the item from "learning as a team dimension, being confident while undertaking organizational tasks, one of the aims of desire to learn is to contribute to institutional development, to solve problems by involving of all members, dominance of team management and team spirit in the work are at "often" level in their school and it is seen that these results overlap with the results, "teachers are open to teamwork and they enjoy it", of a research carried out by Güçlü (2003) and they are of opinion that the items expressed concerning learning school conception that information is transferred fast and

efficiently to entire organization and shared, each member of the institution has tendency to learn and is in the habit of learning through making use of their own and others' experiences are at "sometimes" level. In this case, teachers state that learning school conception does not occur at always level concerning this dimension at school they work. According to the research carried out by Banoğlu (2009), while teachers perceive that they are "sometimes" effective in solving school problems, they perceive "often" according to this research. The results do not support each other. In his study he made at vocational and technical education schools, Boztepe (2007) found that teachers maintain learning activities partially with individual efforts. This result supports the results of this study. According to Güleş's (2007) research results, teachers perceive that learning as a team discipline occurred at sometimes level. According to this research result, they perceive at "usually" level. The results do not overlap.

Teachers are of opinion that the items, concerning learning school conception, that there is trust between teachers and school administrators, that organizational development is fast, that new ideas are supported, that they are encouraged for errors, that rewarding system is functional in the organization, that the administration encourages employees' desire to learn, in "enhancement of employees" dimension occur at "often" level at schools they work. And they are of opinion that the items, concerning school conception, that school employees are dedicated to their jobs and make efforts in their work and there is a good working environment, they prefer to look at events multidimensional occur at "sometimes" level. In this case, teachers state that learning school conception does not occur at always level concerning this dimension at schools they work.

Teachers think that the items stated in "shared vision and culture" dimension, concerning learning school conception that listening to their problems and meeting their needs and demands, determining their training and development needs, contributing their career development, supporting for the achievement of the institution aims, supporting institution employees' learning desire are met at "sometimes" level at their school. It has come out that school administrators have not given the necessary support to teachers to form learning school conception, teachers could not fulfil the needs, expectations, desires,

thoughts and feelings concerning this subjects at always level. In his study he made at vocational and technical education schools, Boztepe (2007) found that the administration supporting learning through school culture and vision is partial. These results overlap with this research results. Teachers think that the items concerning learning school conception in “learning as a team”, “enhancement of employees” and “open management” dimensions are performed at “often” level and in “shared vision and culture” dimension at “sometimes” level. According to this, teachers do not perceive learning school conception at always level in their schools. As a result of the research carried out by Banoğlu (2009), teachers’ perceptions of learning as a team discipline turned out to be at “usually” level. This result supports the result of this research. According to the results of Güleş’s (2007) research, teachers think that there is “sometimes” common vision in primary schools in shared vision discipline. This result overlaps with this research result. In learning school, the essential task of administrator, teacher, student and the other personnel is to internalize the learning and to try to help other individuals acquire desire to learn and enthusiasm. In this sense, individuals must be encouraged to learn together, to share, to create collaboration and team spirit to make schools reached a learning institution qualification (Çalık, 2003:128). In the studies, it was observed that school administrators are the key to success at schools (Açıklın, 1998; Karip ve Köksal, 1999; Yılmaz ve Altınok, 2009). Those administrators have a determining power in institutional success features that they have some psychological characteristics. Because, in the researches, positive reflections of administrators’ emotional characteristics such as being happy and cheerful, looking at life as positive into environment of organization were found (Goleman, Boyatzis ve Mckee, 2002; Yılmaz ve Altınok, 2009). Personal qualities that administrators have affect school climate, school commitment, job satisfaction, morale and performance as well. And this affects school’s goals and success. With all this variables, since management conception at schools affects school’ health, culture, employee motivation, it also will affect learning school conception. This will affect learning school conception of teachers.

While teachers are of opinion that the items, concerning learning school conception, that institution members share their ideas with others, management encourages teamwork, supports teamwork in “open management” dimension occur at “often” level, they are of opinion that the items concerning learning school conception stated as institution members are open to try new approaches and changes they require and there is cooperation among employees to achieve school objectives occur at “sometimes” level. In this case, concerning this dimension, teachers state that learning school conception do not occur at always level at the school they work.

Teachers’ perceptions of learning school conception do not differ meaningfully by gender and seniority variables. According to branch variable, in the “enhancement of employees” dimension, teachers of Visual Arts branch perceptions of learning school conception are more positive than teachers of other branches are. In learning as a team dimension, Visual Arts branch teachers’ perceptions of learning school conception are more positive than Science branch teachers’ are. Difference has not been found between teachers’ perceptions of learning school by seniority variable. Teachers with different seniority are of the opinion that learning school conception in their schools is not at “always” level.

As a result, teachers think that learning school conception is not created or at “always” level in any dimension at the schools they work. According to Güleş’s research results, teachers state that the characteristics concerning learning organization occur at “sometimes” level. This result does not support the results of the study.

### **Suggestions**

1. It may be appropriate that administrators who have important roles in creating learning school conception at schools receive training on school culture and leadership factors.
2. It may be appropriate that teachers receive in-service training concerning learning school conception.
3. In a learning organization, it is essential that administrators be unprejudiced, open

to criticism, supportive to new ideas and try to create an environment where the done work is questioned and knowledge and experiences are shared, learning can easily occur.

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