

# Primary School Principals' Views about In-service Training Activities

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**Abstract**—This study was carried out to determine the feedback from the primary school headmasters on in-service training activities. 384 primary school headmasters were asked to give feedback on the in-service training facilities organized by the Ministry of Education through an open –ended question. The study group was formed by 359 primary school headmasters who attended “Management Skills” seminars which were organized in March, April and May in the extent of 2006 In-service Training Facilities Plan by the Ministry of Education and were also volunteers to give feedback on the in-service training activities. The qualitative research method was used in the analysis of the data since the primary school headmasters gave written feedback on the in-service training activities. Having analyzed the feedback, certain categories were formed by coding it. Certain frequencies and percentages were determined according to the codes. It was made obvious that the primary school headmasters benefitted from those facilities by sharing their experiences, problems and their possible solutions mutually

**Keywords**—In-service training, primary school principles, educates.

## I. INTRODUCTION

ORGANIZATIONS try to adapt the competency and the qualifications of the individuals to the organization [1].

Contemporary organizations and management theories anticipate that the organization and the staff will benefit from the adaptation of the staff [2]. The staff's job satisfaction, their required performance, and their sense of being a member of the organization are all realized through the harmony of organization and individual [3]. It is quite important to acquire the required skills, abilities and appropriate role behaviors, and to have behaviors which are appropriate for organizational values and norms of the study groups [4] in the realization of the adaptation. The adaptation is possibly realized by means of in-service training facilities.

In-service training is a kind of education which is done to help the individuals in organizations to acquire the required knowledge, skills and attitudes in their jobs [5]. In-service training aims to give knowledge, skills and attitudes which will help the staff to be more successful, more productive and happier in their jobs [6]. Science and technology bring new knowledge, techniques and tools for each work area; therefore, they push the staff to learn more and to improve themselves [5].

The leader of interior components is the headmaster who will realize and keep the aims of the schools. The existing changes require the school director to be trained through in service training.

Therefore, the headmasters must be trained through various training facilities, like observational visits both in and out of the country, seminars, clinical studies, consulting services and mutual school and regional visits [7].

In-service training takes place in the work area. The staff's performing his job at the utmost level not only depends on their continuous training, but also is a right. Training is related with the improvement of skills and contribution to this. The training aim is taken as the further improvement of the staff's skills. Organisations, therefore, run training programmes to bring the abilities of the staff to the required level [8]. New behaviors and job activities get easier to learn by means of training programs. In addition to this, by means of these programmes, the opportunities of changing the individual's opinion, teaching new associations and values and adapting to new abilities are formed [9].

In-service training facilities help with not only the adaptation but also being accustomed to the work. An effective program to get accustomed to the work decreases the ratios of leaving the work to a considerably low level; transmits the knowledge of the new staff to the related departments in a systematic way; decreases misunderstanding and disagreement among the staff; and creates a positive work atmosphere [10]. Moreover, the acquisition of cognitive behaviors which are not job-ability-oriented can take place in those programs [11].

Being motivated to in-service training will be an important pioneer in the effectiveness of the training. Motivation after the training is an important starting point in the training process. Some organizations plan the training program to enhance motivation rather than to teach some skills. As a result, training motivation is both a pioneer and a product in the training [12].

The staff, in addition to learning the professional required skills, must learn the aim, the function, the culture of the organization and the ways to be promoted. In a broad context, such training will help with teaching the professional required knowledge, skills and attitudes, and will also help with providing the self-improvement opportunity and the education opportunity to be promoted in the organization [13]. The aim of this study is to define the effectiveness of the in-service training programs organized to improve the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes and success of the headmasters in

the Ministry of Education, and to give suggestions about this subject.

## II. METHOD

The views on in-service training facilities by the primary school headmasters attending "Management Skills" seminars organized at various dates (March, April, May 2006) in the extent of 2006 in-service training facilities plan by the Ministry of Education were determined through an open-ended question (Please write your opinions about in-service training activities in Turkey). Furthermore, the gender, the seniority of the headmasters and the number of the in-service training facilities they attended were also stated to give an idea. 400 headmasters attended to those seminars. 384 of them were asked for views. 359 views forms were taken into evaluation for the study because of some reasons like not giving any views or not returning the views forms.

Since the views from the headmasters were written views, the qualitative research method was used in the analysis of the data [14, 15]. Having defined the responses in terms of gender, seniority and the number of attendance to in-service training, the views from the headmasters about the facilities were determined. To do this, the views were first read separately. After reading them again, the frequencies of the responses were coded under certain categories. In order not to cause to any mistake, the same method was repeated three times. After reading the responses and coding, the frequencies and the percentages were found according to the addition of the views..

## III. FINDINGS

The data showing the gender and the experience of the primary school headmasters in the study group, and the number of the in-service training facilities they attended are in Table 1.

When Table 1 is studied, it is found out that 93, 3 % of the primary school headmasters were male, 6, 7 % of them were female. It is correct to state that women do not prefer being a headmaster. Ergin and Çinkır [16] point out that woman aren't volunteer to be promoted to higher positions, of which the responsibility is high because of their social roles. It is also obvious from the table that 37,8 % of the primary school headmasters have 11-15, 30,1% of them have 16-20, 17,8% of them have 6-10, 7,5% have 26 and more, and 6,8% have 21-25 years of experience. As to the number of the in-service training facilities the headmasters attended, 20,3% attended 3 times, 18,1% once, 17% 5 times, 14,8% twice, 9,5% 6 times, 9,2% 7 times, 5,8% 4 times, 2,5% 10 times, and 1,4% 8 and 14 times.

TABLE I  
THE GENDER AND THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL HEADMASTERS

Variables	f	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	24	6.7
Male	335	93.3
<i>Experience</i>		
6-10 years	64	17.8
11-15 years	136	37.8

16-20 years	108	30.1
21-25 years	24	6.8
26 years and more	27	7.5
<i>The number of the attendance to the in-service training</i>		
Once	65	18.1
Twice	53	14.8
3 times	73	20.3
4 times	21	5.8
5 times	61	17.0
6 times	34	9.5
7 times	33	9.2
8 times	5	1.4
10 times	9	2.5
14 times	5	1.4

Having coded the views from the primary school headmasters and defined certain categories, the frequencies and the percentages were formed. These frequencies and the percentages are given Table 2.

TABLE II  
THE FREQUENCIES AND THE PERCENTAGES OF THE VIEWS FROM THE PRIMARY SCHOOL HEADMASTERS

CATEGORIES	f	%
In-service training facilities are useful	108	12.7
The subjects discussed must be taken into consideration by the authorities and the problems must be solved	12	1.4
The participants must be active in the facilities	16	1.9
Experience and information have been shared in the facilities	184	21.6
They contribute to the professional development	144	16.9
They provide individual relaxation and relieve the stress	28	9.4
The quality of the trainers	76	8.9
The choice of the venue and the time	40	4.7
More facilities and with more participants	80	9.4
Planning	32	3.8
What the trainees learn is applied to the school	24	2.8
The facilities do not serve to the purpose	44	5.1
They increase the motivation	28	3.3
The contents- subjects of the facility	12	1.4
New friendships are set up	16	1.9
Knowing about the history and cultural features of the city where the facility takes place	9	0.8

*In-service training facilities are useful:* 12.7% of the participants stated they believed that the in-service training facilities were useful. The interesting sentences under this statement are the followings:

--- *I think they have positive impact. I find them useful as I learn the new developments and they remind me what I have forgotten.*

-- *That sort of training facilities contributes to the renewal and change of the director's static opinions and thoughts.*

-- *As the educators who trust and renew themselves, I believe in-service training facilities contribute a lot.*

---Those facilities are important in terms of acquiring new skills, repeating the existing knowledge, acquiring new knowledge, setting new targets and changing the behavior.

---Frequent facilities are of course very useful for those who devote themselves to this profession as a professional career and knowledge.

The subjects discussed must be taken into consideration by the authorities and the problems must be solved: 1.4% of the views from the headmasters are about taking the subjects discussed in those facilities into consideration, bringing solutions to them. The statements are as follows;

---The problems discussed at the end of the facility must be solved.

---At the end of the facilities the search for solutions to the problems must certainly be evaluated.

---The subjects discussed must be paid attention by the authorities.

The participants must be active in the facilities: 1.9% of the views about the facilities are focused on the condition of the participants' being active. The interesting statements are as follows;

---Participants should participate in the activities.

---I think these facilities will be more effective if the colleagues are given more chance to speak.

Experience and information have been shared in the facilities: 21.6% (with the biggest ratio) of the views from the primary school headmasters are related with colleagues' sharing the knowledge and experience with each other. It is derived from the responses that they share the problems and the suggestions for the solutions during the communication with each other. Some interesting statements are as follows:

---I am for the idea of acquiring the permanent and fundamental knowledge by sharing them in terms of human relations and professional qualifications. Therefore, I get the communication among the colleagues at the in-service training facilities as a kind of experience.

---Various solution methods of various practices or common problems from different regions enlighten our studies.

---Individuals' sharing what they know with each other makes reaching the truths easier.

---As the facilities are realized through the people's gatherings, who are interested in a specific topic, the interaction among those people helps us improve our behavior and norms.

---We get the chance to see our hits and misses and evaluate our own behaviors by the help of those facilities.

---The biggest benefit from the in-service training facilities is the one which is achieved by the interaction with the trainees rather than the trainers.

---It is considerably beneficial for different people who do the same job to have different practices, to know new people and to have a continuous flow of knowledge through the communication channels between them in the sense of both learning what is new in the field and the job efficiency.

---To get to know new people and to have an idea about the experiences help me be successful in my job.

---I think I have a greater insight into my profession and learn the ways to solve our problems by communicating with my colleagues.

---It is great to share the studies either positive or negative.

---We get the chance to compare and contrast ourselves with other colleagues with the help of those facilities.

---Meeting new people, communicating and providing new contexts for more frequent communication make the in-service training facilities more effective.

---To meet new headmasters from various regions and to give and get idea contribute a lot to one's own improvement.

---In addition to the knowledge and the experience from meeting people who have the same position and job, it is also important to transfer the related data to the practitioners face to face at the in-service training facilities.

---The more the in-service training facilities suit to the participants' expectations, the more meaningful they get. Therefore, the number of those facilities which provide experiences more than the pure knowledge should be increased in the direction of new approaches and developments.

---Since the facilities include deductions from specific processes and experiences and are presented to us, we make use of the existing experiences and avoid the mistakes and misses.

---I met people from several regions in Turkey. I use their methods which they experienced before. I find some of those experiences interesting.

They contribute to my professional development: 16.9% of the responses from the participants are about the professional development. The participants expressed that they improved themselves professional and improved their management skills, attending the facilities. The statements about professional development are as follows:

---I believe that in-service training is essential in professional development.

---I believe that sort of facilities contribute a lot to my professional development and I learn new ideas.

---The training that I get expands my horizon and helps me take action more consciously and confidently.

---They contribute quite a lot to the improvement of my professional skills, expand my social circle and improve my relations with the others.

---They contribute a lot to updating of my professional knowledge, and create management and communication skills and a new vision.

---The biggest contribution of the in-service training facilities are the acquisition of ideas and perceptions, provision of new knowledge and a new insight into management.

---At the end of each seminar, I find the answers to my questions about management.

---At the end of the facility, I notice my lack of knowledge and make it up.

---In-service training facilities help the headmasters and the participants be informed on new trends and approaches and acquire new ideas about the profession.

They provide individual relaxation and relieve the stress: 3.3% of the participant views are about the fact that the facilities provide personal relaxation and relief. The interesting statements about this are as follows:

---I feel that I see the life and the incidents from a different and a large perspective, rather than learn and use them.

---That sort of in-service training facilities supply me with personal dynamics and enthusiasm.

---I feel happy when I join that sort of facilities. They make me relax because of the friendly atmosphere. The stress occurring because of the workload at schools is released and recharged.

---Having left a school context, to be together with different people at a different place makes me relax psychologically.

*The quality of the trainers:* 8.9% of the views from the headmasters are about the qualities of the trainers, their expertise and their training techniques. The headmasters stated that they found some of the trainers helpful and some unhelpful. Those who gave negative views focused more on the point that the trainers didn't inform them on new trends and approaches and they weren't specialized on their fields. The related sentences are as follows:

---The trainers should first make the trainees relax and then train them with a smiling face.

---The seminars should be given by the experts who have the necessary qualifications.

---If the trainers have the required knowledge and experience, they are helpful.

---If the trainer gives the ideas about certain subjects as in 10 years ago as if they were new, there is a serious problem.

---The trainer should first update himself. I didn't have such a case in any of the 3 or 4 seminars that I participated.

---The trainers, unfortunately, give the seminars for the sake of giving a seminar and express that they are obliged to do so. In addition to this, (most of) the trainers aren't capable of their subject areas, tell their life stories and criticize the participants.

---The biggest proportion of the trainees participates in those facilities voluntarily. In spite of this, it is a big mistake for the presenters to show the participants as the guilty part of the problems in the existing system.

---I got the benefit from the ones who were capable of their subject areas but the boredom from those who were not.

---It is expressed by the participants that they expect too much from the teachers.

---The trainers' being well-prepared for the course and experiencing the same problems lead to better seminars.

---Hearing their ideas and approaches directly from the respected scientists who are experts on their subject areas expands the horizons and gives a new excitement.

---The trainers should use the technology more, and there should be more visualization but fewer lectures.

*The choice of the venue and the time:* 4.7% of the views are about the venue, the properties of the venue and the timing. The participants expressed that the venue should be chosen carefully and be close to the places they work. The interesting statements about this are as follows:

---The venues should be decided as to relax the people working intensively in their professional lives.

---I am for the opinion that all the staff should attend the in-service training facilities in their own cities.

---Holding the seminars in cities which have more social life will positively affect the performance.

---The cities, in which there are some institutions, are boring because there aren't satisfactory social activities for the trainers to spend the time after the training.

---Holding that sort of facilities at holiday resorts enhances motivation and morale. While there is an in-service training institution in each region, holding them in one single centre decreases the participation of the ones who come from the long distance.

---Meal, staff's care, heating and cleaning are important issues and therefore, those centers should be appropriate in terms of "availability".

---The facilities should be held in western cities in summer, and in eastern cities and in winter.

*More facilities and with more participants:* 9, 4% of the feedbacks from the participants are on increasing the number of the facilities and giving opportunity to more participants. Related sentences on this are as follows:

---Holding in-service training facilities for more people and applying them in every social stage are important in terms of the development of the society.

---All teachers and administrators should certainly have training once every three years, bearing their experience and difficulty of their tasks.

---I am for the idea that that sort of seminars should be done more often and with more participants.

---Keeping the duration of the seminars short is not sometimes adequate for the ones who come from distant cities. Keeping it longer will be useful in order to have detailed knowledge.

---They should be held frequently and every staff should join the in-service training facilities at least once a year.

---That sort of facilities should be held with more participants in their regions as much as possible.

*What the trainees learn are applied to the school:* 2.8% of the views from the primary school headmasters are about the application of what is learnt. Some interesting sentences are listed below:

---I get impatient to reflect what I learn on the first work day after the seminar.

---I, as a leader in education, apply what I learn to my organization, develop education, and try to help my colleagues in my team.

---When we go back to our schools, we apply some of the experiences to our individual school settings.

*The facilities do not serve to the purpose:* 5.1% of the views from the participants are about the fact that the facilities don't serve to the stated objectives and that there is not any achievement.

---Related theories aren't taught sufficiently and the practices aren't highlighted sufficiently, either.

---In-service training facilities are far beyond reaching the main objectives.

---Most of the courses and seminars are of low quality.

---I don't think the facilities don't contribute much to the values, norms and behaviors that the profession requires. Those values are gained through the interaction of master – apprentice during either our university education or the first years of our work. The facilities not only remind the

previously gained knowledge but also review it in a systematic way.

---There is nothing that goes beyond my own methods and experience.

---Before I participate, I usually have higher expectations, but later on I get disappointed with what I observe.

---Those facilities which lack planning and organization do not teach me anything but erase my positive opinions.

*They increase the motivation:* 3.3 % of the views from the participants are about the fact that those facilities increase the motivation. The statements on this issue are as follows:

---Being together with the colleagues motivates us.

---To meet with the colleagues who share most of the problems with me and who express that the problems are common enhances my ambition to overcome the problems.

---Having a nice atmosphere and getting knowledge motivate and make me relax.

*Planning:* 3.8% of the views from the participants are about the fact that the facilities lack planning. The related statements are as follows:

---While planning those facilities, the participants, the topics and the trainers should be determined at least three months before and a more convenient venue should be borne in mind.

---If the facilities are well-planned and organized, they are more helpful.

---While planning that sort of facilities, certain venues and activities should be taken into consideration after the sessions.

---The needs of those who are to attend to those facilities should be analyzed beforehand and the contents should be specified accordingly.

*The contents- subjects of the facility:* 1.4% of the participant's views are about the contents. The statements on this issue are as follows:

---They don't add much on what I already know and apply.

---The methods, such as brainstorming and project work, should be used in the facilities.

---The facilities, the contents of which can't be put into practice, decrease the number of participants and lead to the conclusion of "Forget about it because they don't teach, anyhow."

*New friendships are set up:* According to the views (1.9%), new friendships are set up during that sort of facilities. The statements on this are as follows:

---I have met people from varied parts of our country and made new friends.

---Life gets more precious to live up, making respectable friends.

---I get together with worthy people.

*Learning about the historical and socio-cultural features of the city where the facility takes place:* 0.9% of the participant views is about the fact of learning about the historical and socio-cultural features of the city, in which the venue is. The statements about this fact are as follows:

---We learn about the historical and cultural values of the neighboring cities and the city where the facility takes place.

---It is useful to see new places.

#### IV. CONCLUSION and COMMENTS

In-service training facilities have a great role in performing the task required from the administrator as a member of the organization, spending some effort and learning about the changes. Achievement criteria and the use of ability and knowledge are consolidated during that sort of facilities. As it is understood from the findings, the participants highlight the benefits of the in-service training facilities and demand more frequent facilities, as well. The facilities should be done at certain intervals, in order to update the educators with the new improvements.

The professional development introducing the school administrator's authority and responsibilities is an important approach to improve schools [17]. Therefore, it is clear from the percentage and frequency terms that the school headmasters find the in-service training facilities important for their professional development. Focusing this will at the in-service training facilities on the issues like the development of the staff's skills, creativity, success, progress and ability [18] would even more increase the administrator's will of professional development.

As we deduce from the findings the school headmasters form friendships with the other participants and share what they practice and experience. The importance of fulfilling the social needs [18], such as communicating with the other staff, being accepted and making new friends, in Maslow's motivation theory is worth considering. Wexley and Yukl [19] state that positive cooperation with the colleagues increases the staff's satisfaction from the work, and Pascale [20] highlights forming relationships describing the appropriate role models as an important step in socialization. Furthermore, the process of communication among the colleagues is effective in reaching the overall quality and accomplishment.

Can [10] realization of the goals of the organization can exactly occur through the accord of the organizational and individual attitudes, values and behaviors. This accord process is possible with the in-service training facilities stated as adaptation programme. Understanding the organization culture thoroughly is realized by getting experience gradually. As it is understood from the findings, the primary school headmasters stated that they shared their knowledge and skills the most. Therefore, the in-service training facilities need to be organized in a way of sharing those mutually. Hence, the in-service training facilities ought to be organized in a way that the work groups / colleagues doing the same job discuss the practices, the problems and the solutions mutually, deriving from the fact 'the best teacher is experience'. That sort of organization could also be done for the inexperienced administrators / vice administrators.

Saphier and King state that one of the fundamental values of the effective schools is giving importance to practice [21]. As it is understood from the findings of the research, the headmasters expect solutions from their colleagues and their line managers. As Bursalioğlu [7] points out, the in-service training programmes should cover the analysis and solution of some of the fundamental issues of the headmasters, as well. Review of school system, problem solution, case study,

research on the field, conferencing techniques and observational visits are the actions to do this.

In the job descriptions for the primary school headmasters at the Ministry of Education, it is stated that the headmaster, as an education leader, carries out his education and administration duties at the school in the framework of law, regulations, statute, circular, decree and work schedule [22]. According to the outcome, when the in-service training facilities are taken as “learning about the rules”, training and the process of learning what is important in an organization or in some of its sub-divisions [10], it is understood that the primary school headmasters perceive the laws “in obeying the rules” but there is not sufficient facility on this issue. Gordon (1933) highlights that the individual adapts himself by acquiring the rules and the principles [23] are ensuring the unification with the identity of the organization.

Holding the in-service training facilities in a comfortable environment and time is essential. Therefore, the factors, such as venue, date, titles and trainers’ position should be planned in detail beforehand. In a study by Yalın [6] about the evaluation of the in-service training facilities held by the Ministry of Education, the trainees pointed out that they ought to be consulted at the planning stage.

Some of the headmasters who joined to the study expressed that that sort of facilities didn’t serve the stated purpose and meet the expectations. The writer joined to the in-service training facilities several times, both as a trainee and a trainer. Even though the trainees join voluntarily, he observed that they had such as expressions “there is no use, anyhow”, and the trainers and the facility managers did it just for the sake of the work. Bursalıoğlu [7] points out that the reason for the failure and lack of interest in most of the in-service training facilities is because they aren’t motivated.

At the end of the research, the trainees stated that the trainers should have a good command of their subject area; and the contents should be satisfactory and meet the requirements. Yalın [6], in his study about the evaluation of the in-service training facilities by the Ministry of Education, points out that the trainees ought to be active through activities, such as group work, practice study and discussion; and the courses should be pleasurable and rich in using course materials. Yalın [6], in his study, expresses that the trainees advised that the trainers should be chosen from those who are experienced and well-qualified in academic grounds.

The study group stated that the facilities didn’t take long enough, and number and the duration of the facilities should be increased with more trainees. In the above stated study by Yalın [6], 45% of the trainees found the duration of the facilities they joined completely insufficient, very little sufficient and partly sufficient. Theory- focused pre-service training, direct transfer from teaching to administration as “teaching is essential at the position”, and secondary importance of the theory after administrators’ starting the new position make the in-service training essential. In addition, the inspection and administration staff’s not supplying the satisfactory support and not guiding well enough disappoint them, as well. The uncertainty of the performance evolution criteria and the evaluation lacking objective criteria by the administration and inspection staff give the administrators a

great difficulty. The administrators should be supported with the continuous training programmes (experience transfer, informing on the new trends, problem solving, etc) after they start their new position and all their professional lives. Taking these facts as the main policy of our education system and administrator training are what education staff desire.

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