

## Middle School Administrators' Perceptions about Education's Contribution to Human Capital

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### Abstract

### Original Research Article

The purpose of this study was to analyse the middle school administrators' perceptions about education's contribution to human capital in terms of the variables of gender, seniority, education level and the type of the school. The data were collected from 410 school administrators working in public and private middle school, which were in Mersin Province in the fall semester of 2018-2019 academic year. It was found out that there was a significant difference among the school administrators' perceptions in terms of the variables of gender, seniority, education level and the type of the school.

**Keywords:** School administrators, perceptions, human capital, economics of education.

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## INTRODUCTION

Economics of education is an interdisciplinary field which is the study of economic issues relating to education and which attracts more attention as the economy gains more prominence. Economy and education are significant concepts that constitute the economics of education. Education, which means a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools, colleges or universities, to improve knowledge and develop skills, has always been interrelated with economy due to the fact that the inputs and outputs of education have continuously been influenced by the economy and its inputs and outputs has also affected the economy. Economy, which is a system for distributing limited resources and which finds ways of reconciling unlimited wants with limited resources, is an umbrella term for a great deal of economic activities and economic concepts that also interest education [1].

One of the concepts which both interest economy and education is the term "capital". Concept of capital has a lot of definitions. In the 19th century, capital was defined as wealth or property that is owned by a business or a person and can be invested or used to start a business and it could also mean an amount of money that is invested or is used to start a business. However, in 20th and 21st century, the concept of capital turned into an umbrella term and took on new meanings such as social capital which denotes the

networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society that enable the society to exist and be successful [2] and cultural capital which means the skills, education, norms, behaviours, cultural habits and worldview acquired by members of a social group that can give them economic and other advantages and that promote social mobility in a stratified society. Additionally, there are other terms coined and derived from capital such as psychological capital which includes self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience and means a set of resources individuals can benefit to enable them to improve their achievement and performance on the job [3] and intellectual capital which can be defined as the information, competency, knowledge and expertise an individual owns. All of these "capitals" have some common features; they all need investments such as time and effort and they all provide the individuals with some returns that can help them successful in their lives.

In addition to the terms indicated above, there is another important term which was derived from capital and which provides the individuals with significant returns. The name of this term is human capital. Human capital means the skills, knowledge and experience of a person or group of people, seen as something valuable that an organization or country can make use of. According to [4] and [5] the human capital means knowledge, skill, understanding and values

accumulated in human beings that influences the production process directly or indirectly. Human capital consists of the knowledge, skills, and health that people invest in and accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as productive members of society [6].

There is also a theory in the economics of education which is based on the concept of human capital and the name of this theory is Human Capital Theory. This theory has some premises and assumptions about the functions of education. According to this theory, education boosts a person's productivity at work and the fact that a person's education level increases enable him/her to have higher positions in his/her career. Human Capital Theory, which regards education as a financial investment in a person's future, suggests that students go to school so that they can gain more knowledge and skills and the rate of return from educational investments rises when a person invests more money and time in education [7]. Moreover, this theory assumes that university graduates are employed more quickly and easily and in a shorter time than high school graduates and the wage gap between university graduates and high school graduates widens over the years. Furthermore, this theory has the assumption that education contributes to a person's having nonfinancial returns. For example, according to this theory, education results in the fact that individuals live longer by making them healthier and education raises individuals' standards of living. Additionally, education contributes to the reduction in individual's fertility rate according to this theory [8, 9, 10, 11].

In the literature, it was determined that there were some researches on human capital, which were undertaken abroad. Some of the results of these researches were in line with the explanations and implications of Human Capital Theory while some of these results didn't support the explanations and implications of Human Capital Theory [12, 13, 14]. In Turkey, there are few research in the field of education related to Human Capital Theory [15, 16]. In these researches, it was found out that the results of these researches verified the explanations and implications of Human Capital Theory. Though these researches were conducted in Turkey, it was determined that there weren't any researches on middle school administrators' perceptions related to the explanations and implications of Human Capital Theory. The middle school administrators' perceptions about the explanations and implications of Human Capital Theory can provide significant information for economic functions of education in Turkey. Moreover, the results of the study can contribute to the researches on educational administration and economics of education that will be undertaken in the future.

## THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to analyse the middle school administrators' perceptions about education's contribution to human capital in terms of the variables of gender, seniority, education level, the type of the school.

## METHOD

### Research Model

In the research, the perceptions of the middle school administrators working in public and private middle schools in the Mersin Province about education's contribution to human capital are compared in terms of variables of gender, seniority, educational level and the type of school. It is aimed to determine whether there is a significant difference among the school administrators' perceptions. As the research aims to determine the existing situation as it is, it is a descriptive research. Hence, a general scanning model is used in the research. The different groups are compared in terms of the variables indicated above.

### Population and Sample

The target population of the study includes administrators working in public and private middle school, which were in Mersin Province in the fall semester of 2018-2019 academic year. As it wasn't possible to reach all of the school administrators, a sample was chosen from the population. Accordingly, simple random technique was used and 410 school administrators were determined as the sample [17].

### The Research Instruments

To collect the data related to the perceptions of the middle school administrators about education's contribution to human capital, the scale which was developed by [18] was used in the study. The name of the scale is The Scale of Teachers' Perceptions About Their Educational Background and Their Levels of Income. The scale is a Likert-type scale and its items are rated on 5 point scale which ranges from Definitely Disagree (1) to Definitely Agree (5). The reliability and validity analyses of the scale were performed. It was determined that the scale was reliable and valid and it could be applied to the school administrators. It was seen that that Cronbach alpha for the scale is 0,987. Only one dimension of the scale was used in the study. The name of the dimension of the scale was The Dimension of Education's Contribution to Human Capital.

### Data Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 was used to analyze the data. The data were analysed in terms of marginal values, missing value, normality and multi-collinearity before the data were analysed. In other words, the assumptions of the analyses were tested. Mean values and standard deviation were computed to determine school principals' perceptions. T-test was used to determine

whether there was a significant difference among the school administrators' perceptions in terms of the variable of gender, type of school and education level. One-way variance analysis (ANOVA) was applied to determine whether there was a significant difference among school principals' perceptions in terms of the variable of the seniority. When the significant difference was detected, Tukey HSD Test was used to determine which groups differed and to clarify which

groups among the sample in specific had significant differences.

## RESULTS

The results of the t-test, which is performed to determine whether there is a significant difference among the middle school administrators' perceptions about the education's contribution to human capital in terms of the variable of gender are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: The results of the t-test, which is performed to determine whether there is a significant difference among the middle school administrators' perceptions about the education's contribution to human capital in terms of the variable of gender**

Dimension	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	t	p
Education's Contribution to Human Capital	Women	127	2.62	1.29	4.247	.000**
	Man	283	3.54	1.37		

\*\*p<.001 \*p<.01

As it is seen in Table 1, there is a significant difference between the means of the points of the school administrators' perceptions related to the Dimension of Education's Contribution to Human Capital [ $t = 4.24$   $p < .001$ ] in terms of the variable of gender. There is a significant difference between the perceptions of male and female school administrators about education's contribution to human capital. According to findings, the mean value of the male school administrators' perceptions in the Dimensions of Education's Contribution to Human Capital ( $\bar{X} = 3.54$ ) is higher than the mean value of female school administrators' perceptions ( $\bar{X} = 2.62$ ) and the mean

value of male school administrators' perceptions is at a level of "agree" while the mean value of female school administrators' perceptions is at a level of "partially". Male school administrators' perception that education contributes to human capital is higher than female school administrators' perception.

The results of the one way variance analysis, which is performed to determine whether there is a significant difference among the middle school administrators' perceptions about the education's contribution to human capital in terms of the variable of seniority, are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: The results of one way variance analysis, which is performed to determine whether there is a significant difference among the middle school administrators' perceptions about the education's contribution to human capital in terms of the variable of seniority**

Dimensions	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	P
Education's Contribution to Human Capital	Between Groups	3.158	7	.623	6.874	.011*
	Within Groups	142.417	407	.344		
	Total	144.245	409			

\*p<.05

As it is seen in Table 2, there is a significant difference among the means of the points of the school administrators' perceptions related to the Dimension of Education's Contribution to Human Capital [ $F = 6.87$   $p < .05$ ] in terms of the variable of seniority. The results of Tukey HSD test establish that the means of the school administrators whose seniority was over 25 years differ from the teachers whose seniority was between 5-14 years and 15 and 25 years. In other words, the school administrators whose seniority was over 25 years cause the source of variance. The mean of the perception of the school administrators whose seniority was over 25 years is at a level of "agree" while the mean of the perception of school administrators

whose seniority was between 5-14 years and 15 and 25 years is at a level of "partially agree". Accordingly, the perception of the school administrators whose seniority was over 25 years that education contributes to human capital is higher than that of the school administrators whose seniority was between 5-14 years and 15 and 25 years.

The results of the t-test, which is carried out to determine whether there is a significant difference among the middle school administrators' perceptions about the education's contribution to human capital in terms of the variable of the type of school, are shown in Table-3.

**Table 3: The results of the t-test, which is carried out to determine whether there is a significant difference among the middle school administrators' perceptions about the education's contribution to human capital in terms of the variable of the type of school**

Dimensions	The type of school where the school administrators work	N	$\bar{X}$	S	t	p
Education's Contribution to Human Capital	Public School	305	3.31	1.53	7.414	.017*
	Private School	105	3.75	1.78		

\*p&lt;.05

As it is seen in Table 3, there is a significant difference between the means of the points of the school administrators' perceptions related to the Dimension of Education's Contribution to Human Capital [ $t = 7.41$   $p < .05$ ] in terms of the variable of the type of school where the school administrators work. There is a significant difference between the perceptions of school administrators working in public schools and school administrators working in private schools about the education's contribution to human capital. According to the findings, the mean value of the perceptions of school administrators working in private schools in the Dimensions of Education's Contribution to Human Capital is higher than the mean value of the perceptions of school administrators working in public schools and the mean value of the perceptions of the

school administrators working in private schools is at a level of "agree" while the mean value of the perceptions of the school administrators working in the public schools is at a level of "partially agree". The perception level of school administrators working in private school related to the fact that education contributes to human capital is higher than the perceptions of the school administrators working in public schools.

The results of the t-test, which is carried out to determine whether there is a significant difference among the middle school administrators' perceptions about the education's contribution to human capital in terms of the variable of the education level, are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: The results of the t-test, which is carried out to determine whether there is a significant difference among the middle school administrators' perceptions about the education's contribution to human capital in terms of the variable of the education level**

Dimensions	Education Level	N	$\bar{X}$	S	t	p
Education's Contribution to Human Capital	Bachelor's Degree	295	3.23	1.457	6.386	.001*
	Master's Degree	115	3.91	1.985		

\*p&lt;.001

As it is seen in Table 4, there is a significant difference between the means of the points of the school administrators' perceptions related to the Dimension of Education's Contribution to Human Capital [ $t = 6.38$   $p < .001$ ] in terms of the variable of education level. There is a significant difference between the perceptions of school administrators who have bachelor's degree and master's degree in terms of their perceptions about education's contribution to human capital. According to findings, the mean value of the school administrators having master's ( $\bar{X}=3.91$ ) is higher than the mean value of school administrators having bachelor's degree ( $\bar{X}=3.23$ ) in terms of their perceptions about education's contribution to human capital. The mean value of school administrators having master's degree is at a level of "agree" while the mean value of school administrators having bachelor's degree is at a level of "partially agree".

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the middle school administrators' perceptions about education's contribution to human capital in terms of the variables of gender, seniority, the type of school and education level were analysed and it was determined that there

was a significant difference among the school administrators' perceptions in terms of these variables. It is determined that there is a significant difference between the means of the points of the school administrators' perceptions related to the Dimension of Education's Contribution to Human Capital in terms of the variable of gender. Male school administrators' perception that education contributes to human capital is higher than female school administrators' perception. This result of the study is in line with the researches done before [19, 20, 21]. The female school principals' perception about the education's contribution to human capital may be lower than male school principals' perception due to the fact that the female school principals face the problems and difficulties caused by glass ceiling, which prevents them from more advantages in their profession [22].

In the research, It is determined that there is a significant difference between the means of the points of the school administrators' perceptions related to the Dimension of Education's Contribution to Human Capital in terms of the variable of education level. The perception of the school administrators having master's degree that education contributes to human capital is higher than that of the school administrators having

bachelor's degree. This finding is supported by [23]'s research findings which determined that the returns of education rose when the level of education rose. Having master's degree may enable school administrators to gain more income and plus value.

In the research, it was determined that there is a significant difference among the means of the points of the school administrators' perceptions related to the Dimension of Education's Contribution to Human Capital in terms of seniority. The perception of the school administrators whose seniority was over 25 years that education contributes to human capital is higher than that of the school administrators whose seniority was between 5-14 years and 15 and 25 years. This finding can be explained by Mincer's research in which it was found out that 30 % percent of the incomes could be explained by experience [24, 25]. As the school administrators whose seniority was over 25 teachers have more experience than others, they have more opportunities for experiencing the contribution of education to their lives and returns of education.

In the research, it was determined that there was a significant difference between the means of the points of the school administrators' perceptions related to the Dimension of Education's Contribution to Human Capital in terms of the variable of the type of school where the school administrators work. The perceptions of the school administrators working in private schools about the fact that education contributes to human capital is higher than the perceptions of the school administrators working in public schools. This finding can be confirmed and explained by the findings of [26]'s research which determined that the return of education in private sector was 16.89% for men graduating from the university while the return of education in public sector was 9.35% for men graduating from the university. The results of this study is also supported by [27, 28].

Necessary conditions should be created in order to make the school administrators feel necessary for increasing their education level [29 30, 31, 32]. Therefore, a system in which the school administrators having a master's degree and doctorate degree earn more money should be established. In other words, new incentives for school administrators' increasing their human capital should be created. The school administrators' quality of educational background and personality should be considered for the school administrators' being employed and determining their salaries.

The researchers can carry out qualitative research on the school principals or teachers' perception about education's contribution to human capital. This study can be done in primary schools and high schools.

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