

## High School Teachers' Perception of Institutional Trust

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### Abstract

The current study aims to determine the teachers' views on trust in high schools. The study group of the research consisted of 138 teachers who served general, Anatolian, and vocational high schools within the borders of city of Van. The researcher developed a semi-structured interview form as a data collection tool. Nine sub-titles were included in relation to the reasons for trust and distrust. Teachers' responses in the interview form were computerized and their percentages and frequencies were calculated. Each response was numbered and coded and put on the statistics software. Through the statistics software, percentages and frequencies of teacher views in relation to high school type, gender, and seniority were obtained. Teachers stated 604 views in total. 314 of these views were of trust and 290 were of distrust. In relation to trust, teachers mostly stated reasons stemming from administrators and teachers; they mostly stated the reasons stemming from students and parents, in relation to distrust. General and vocational high school teachers stated that they felt reassured when students were respectful and polite whereas Anatolian high school teachers said that they felt reassured when students were admitted through an exam. Both general and Anatolian high school teachers stated that they felt unsafe due to inefficient administrators whereas vocational high school teachers stated that they felt unsafe due to favoritism by administrators.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is possible to see the positive or negative impact of trust on people either in organizations or in everyday life. Without trust, it is no easy to find solutions for social problems. In order for the social structure to be preserved, it is important to establish a network based on trust. This is also so for the organizations. It is not considered possible for the servers of organizations, not based on trust, to improve working qualities. Trust develops gradually and is always questioned; it is quite sensitive and fragile.

Institutional trust is about the employees feeling safe within the organization and being supported by the employer (Gilbert & Tang, 1998; Lahno, 2001). Trust is not only one person's issue but it is for everyone. It relates to administrators and colleagues. Trust requires acting up to the norms and values. Trust means being honest. If someone is promised about something, the promise is kept (Lahno, 2001); then, the trust will minimize the risks. The trust unites people and this unity, at the same time, instills safety in them. The trust is also very fragile and can be easily shattered. Its failure will be painful and destructive for both the organization and the people (Gilbert & Tang, 1998).

Brownell (2000) lists the points to take into account for institutional trust as follows: to fulfill promises and pledges, to be open and honest in communication channels, to know how to listen, making employees feel safe, to be reachable, to tell the truth, to respect, to be fair and consistent, to organize collaboration and seek for ways to help, not to look for excuses and not to blame, and to be open to accountability. Communication available within the organization will reduce obscurity and increase the dependability and credibility of the organization. Open communication positively impacts the employees' attitudes towards change. Administration must be constructive towards its employees and value their views in order to establish trust through open communication (Gilbert & Tang, 1998).

A significant and positive relationship was found between the trust and the organizational loyalty, job satisfaction, and the social responsibility in studies. Namely, as the trust for the top management and the trust within the organization are established, employees' organizational loyalty, job satisfaction, perception of institutional justice, and levels of social responsibility increase. Through the established trust in organizations, employees' intentions of quitting the job, inattention to work, walk out, and job transfer decrease and, thus, organizational efficiency increases (Polat, 2007; Özbek, 2006). Halis, Gökgöz, and Yaşar (2007) found in their studies that employees' participation in decision-making process, their being authorized in their own fields, and their receiving of performance feedback increase institutional trust; thus, employees' loyalty in the organization and institutional performance increase.

A culture of trust at school improves collaboration among administrators, teachers, students, and other employees and also encourages and supports them about innovations implemented at school (Erden, 2008). In order for a safe environment to be established at school, teachers' personalities must be respected and they must be paid attention. Teachers must comfortably express their opinions and principals must be open to new ideas. A network of relationships based on trust must be constructed at school. Teachers must not hurt one another in relationships (Kochanek, 2005).

Once an environment of trust at school is established between the teachers and the administrators, the parties will put more energy and effort in their work. If an environment of trust is not built at school, the administrator will adopt a more controlling, pressurizing, and authoritarian management style (Başaran, 1998). This will be reflected negatively on teachers and they will feel constantly threatened and pressurized; thus, their teaching and job quality will be negatively impacted. Parents depend on teachers about their children's education and teachers on the other hand depend, on administrators about improving the environment of education to the best. In order for the environment of education to be improved, first of all, trust within the school is required (Kochanek, 2005).

Administrators must not judge employees and everyone must have equal rights within the organization. Work groups must be supported and collaboration among groups must be provided. Each

individual within the organization must respect others' rights and a sense of unity must be instilled in the employees. Employees must not be discriminated and transparent management must be maintained. The organization must not be biased on race, gender, nationality, and religion (Kochanek, 2005).

An environment of trust both for teachers and students must be provided for an efficient education (Öğülmüş, 2006). In an environment where teachers do not feel safe, effective learning and teaching are hard to take place. Schools are required to be places where every teacher feels safe against any type of physical and psychological threats and dangers and finds opportunities of collaboration; individual differences are accepted and respected. A teacher, whose basic needs are not met, not feeling safe against any danger and threats will not be adequately fruitful about teaching and instruction. Therefore, in relation to organizational objectives, schools must build environments where both teachers and students feel safe (Sonmezer & Eryaman, 2008; Öğülmüş, 2006).

Many studies, with majority (Aktan, 1999; Kamer, 2001; Günaydın, 2001; Özen İşbaşı, 2001; Güneşer, 2002; Arı, 2003; Yaşar, 2005; Tüzün, 2006; Özbek, 2006, as cited in Çokluk-Bökeoğlu & Yılmaz) in organizational settings, on the concept of trust have been conducted in Turkey. Recently though, the number of studies (Memduh & Zengin 2009, Çokluk-Bökeoğlu and Yılmaz 2008, Erden 2007, Geyin 2007, Polat 2007, Özer et al. 2006, Yılmaz 2005, Özdiş 2005, Turan, 2001) conducted on trust in educational settings has well been increasing. However, the studies conducted in eastern cities and particularly high schools are very limited in numbers (Dönmez & Güven 2003, Dönmez & Güven 2002). The current study, conducted in high schools in Van as an eastern city, is intended to fill a gap. Nevertheless, more studies in high school settings are required to be conducted.

The current study aims to determine the perceptions of trust in high schools by teachers employed in high schools. The following questions have been answered for this purpose:

1. What are high school teachers' perceptions of trust in high schools?
2. Are there any differences among high school teachers' perceptions of trust in high schools, in relation to high school type, gender, and seniority?

## METHOD

The current study aiming to determine high school teachers' perceptions on institutional trust was conducted in the general survey model. Survey model aims to describe the studies subject as it was in the past or it is presently. General survey model is a research design to study a universe with multiple elements as a whole or a group from that universe (Karasar, 2009, 77).

### Study Group

The study group of the current research consisted of 138 volunteering high school teachers with 58% (80) from seven general high schools, 17% (23) from three Anatolian high schools, and 25% (35) from two vocational high schools (25%) located in Van city center in 2009. 20% (27) of the participants were female whereas 80% (111) were males. Seniority groups of the participating teachers were as follows: 30% (41) in 0-5 years, 49% (68) in 6-10 years, and 15% (21) in 11 years and over.

### Data Collection Tool

The semi-structured interview form "Perception of Trust in Schools" developed by the researcher was used as the data collection tool. The form included one basic question asking whether teachers feel safe at their schools and, following this question, nine sub-titles associated with the reasons why teachers feel or do not feel safe at the schools. The interview form was examined by literature experts and teachers in relation to language accuracy and by the field experts in relation to

content validity. Upon feedback of form evaluation, required changes were made on the interview form and it was applied.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Research data were collected by the researcher. First of all, each teacher's responses were separately entered into Microsoft Office Word Software. The frequency of cyclical responses within the entered responses was obtained and each response was numbered and coded. Later, teachers' personal details and their responses were entered into the statistics SPSS Software. Through the Crosstabs software, percentages and frequencies of teachers' responses in relation to high school type, gender, and seniority were found.

## **FINDINGS**

Findings on reasons why teachers felt safe and did not feel safe and how these were expressed in relation to high school type, gender, and seniority have been included under this heading.

### **Teachers' Views on Reasons Why They Felt Safe**

Teachers' views on reasons why they felt safe were presented in relation to administrators, principals, teachers, students, parents, and department head, ministry of national education, environment, participants, and some other reasons.

Majority of the participant teachers (21) stated that they felt safe because their administrators listened to them; they were interested and sensitive without prejudice; they were understanding and tolerant. In addition (from most frequently stated to less frequently stated), teachers stated that they felt safe when administrators helped them (16); performed their duties (12); were unbiased (6); maintained order (6) and mutual trust (4); and were experienced (3) and felt safe whereas teacher m1 said "I feel safe because we share the same culture with our administrators".

High school teachers mostly attributed the reasons for trust based on school culture to '*their school as a well-established institution respected by those around*' (10). In addition, teachers stated that they felt safe when there was a warm and sincere medium at school (3); their school was successful (2); the school maintained a good order (2). Teacher d14 stated that *students from rural areas respect teachers more than other students*. Another teacher d15 said that *s/he felt safer with professional collaboration among teachers*.

High school teachers mostly attributed the reasons for trust based on teachers to *sincere relationships based on respect and love* (19). In addition, teachers stated that they felt safe based on the following: *collaboration and solidarity* (13), and *a good communication among teachers* (10), *teachers being tolerant and reasonable* (5) *with expertise and pedagogical formation* (4), *teachers acting in harmony* (3) *sensibly* (3). In addition, teacher c1 stated that *s/he felt safe because students motivated teachers with love and respect*. Teacher k5 put forward *guiding students*, teacher m4 mentioned *providing order*, teacher s1 included *young teachers*, and teacher s2 added *sharing a common goal* as reasons for feeling safe.

Teachers mostly attributed the reasons for trust based on students to *students acting with respect and politeness* (24). In addition, teachers stated that they felt safe based on the following: *high achieving students admitted through an exam* (8), *good relations with students* (8), *students with the sense of responsibility* (3), *students put in order through discipline* (2). Whereas teacher T8 mentioned *students owning their teachers* as a reason for safety, teacher V3 added *majority of students from outside the city*, teacher m5 included *students from better economic backgrounds*, and teacher ms6 mentioned *hardworking students* as reasons for safety.

Teachers mostly attributed the reasons for trust based on parents to *some parents caring and helping teachers* (12) and *sensible and wise parents* (10). In addition, teachers stated that they felt safe when *parents trusted, respected, and valued them* (5). Teacher E3 stated that *s/he felt safe because parents did not frequently visited school*.

Teachers mostly attributed the reasons for trust based on the Provincial Directorate for National Education to *better control and follow up by the Directorate* (5). In addition, teachers stated that they felt safe when *the relations with the Provincial Directorate for National Education were better* (3) and when *the Directorate did not practice favoritism* (3) and *encouraged positive activities*.

High school teachers mostly attributed the reasons for trust based on the Ministry of National Education to *the Ministry's supportive activities towards teachers* (6). In addition, teachers stated that they felt safe based on the following: *the Ministry impartially viewing the issues* (2), *an established system* (2), *a trustable Ministry, implementable Regulations for Discipline and Rewards, the presence of security staff at each school, and being better about the regulations and follow up*.

Teachers mostly attributed the reasons for trust based on the environment to the following: *safe environment around the school* (12) and *the school located in the place where teachers were born and knew the environment* (5). They also added that they felt safe because *the school was old and those around respected the school*.

High school teachers attributed the reasons for trust based on themselves to the following: *proficiency in the profession and satisfactorily fulfilling duties* (18) and *good relations with students, teachers, and parents* (10). Teachers also stated that they felt safe based on the following: *love for the profession and the students* (4), *being a safe person* (3), *being patient and wise* (2). Teacher m2 mentioned *his/her first years in the profession* as reasons for safety, teacher z4 added *being authoritative in the class*, teacher f5 put forward *knowingly applying to work in the school and knowing the administrators*, and teacher ms7 included *trying to have students apply to jobs* as reasons for safety.

In addition, teacher z5 stated that an increase in guidance-counselling services would make them safer; teacher v8 mentioned multiple numbers of teachers and teacher k1 added multiple social and cultural activities as reasons for feeling safe.

### **Teachers' Views on Why They did not Feel Safe**

Findings associated with why teachers did not feel safe were presented in relation to administrators, school culture, teachers, students, parents, and head of education department, environment, participants, and other reasons.

High school teachers stated mostly the following as the administrator-based reasons of distrust: *inefficiency among administrators* (10) and *favoritism* (7). In addition, they stated the following as other factors that made teachers feel unsafe: *administrators supporting the students when teachers confront the students* (5), *no security staff employed at schools* (3), *inattentive administrators* (2), and *teachers not being trusted* (2). Teacher m6 mentioned *very formal relationships* as a reason for unsafety, whereas teacher k7 added *no appreciation for achievements*, teacher h3 included *school administration together with students negatively spying on teachers*, and teacher e9 put forward *often replaced school administration*.

The most frequently stated reason, based on school culture, for distrust at schools by the teachers was *cultural conflict* (6). The following also were stated as the reasons, based on school culture, for distrust by the teachers: *no existing school culture* (2), *violence viewed as the solution to problems* (2), and *school with a negative image in the environment* (2). Teacher h2 added *wide-spread back biting at school* as another reason for feeling unsafe.

Teachers mostly stated the *cliques among teachers* (10) and *professional inefficiency* (5) for reasons to feel unsafe for. In addition, teachers stated the following as reasons why they felt unsafe: *people with behavioral issues* (3), *no loyalty towards the school and not embracing the school* (3), *very frequent changes* (3), *telling on people* (2), *teachers reflecting political views in the work environment and using students against others* (2). Teacher a3 added *viewing violence as solution* and teacher e4 mentioned *financial needs* as reasons for feeling unsafe.

Teachers stated mostly the following as the student-based reasons of distrust: *aggressive students capable of violence and crime and students fighting* (15) and *students exhibiting negative and disrespectful behaviors* (11). In addition, teachers stated that they had worries about the following: *students' low and inefficient levels* (9), *irresponsible and insensitive students* (7), *language problems and local differences* (3), *students threatening teachers and their families* (2), *cliques among students* (2), *students acting impulsively* (2), and *unstable students without self-confidence* (2). Teacher v7 added *students' financial issues*, and teacher o5 mentioned *TV and internet-addicted students* among reasons for feeling unsafe.

Teachers mostly stated the *inattentive and insensitive parents* (26) as the parent-based reason for distrust. Other reasons that teachers stated for distrust were as follows: *uninformed and insensible parents with low-levels of education* (6), *some parents sending their children to school only to be away from home* (5), *parents inclined for violence* (5), *parents always blaming teachers for their under-achieving children* (5), *some parents pressurizing and threatening teachers to let their children to pass* (3), and *parents coming to school with prejudices instilled by students* (2). Teacher o9 added *parents viewing claiming their rights against teachers as sending them to exile* as another reason for feeling unsafe.

Teachers mostly stated that they felt unsafe due to *inattentive and insensitive Directorate of Education in the city* (8) and *favoritism practices by the directorate* (4). Teachers also listed the other reasons why they felt unsafe as follows: *inefficient employees* (3), *difficulties in an unorganized structure* (2), *constant support only for administrators and students* (2), and *administrators securing their own interests* (2). Teacher a5 added *over-authorized administrators*, teacher z8 mentioned *viewing teachers as the source of all problems*, teacher s9 included *pressurizing teachers*, and teacher v9 *not doing an extensive work for schools and parents* as reasons for feeling unsafe.

Teachers stated that they mostly felt unsafe because they had *inadequate salaries and employee personal rights* (10) and *teachers were not valued adequately* (8). Teachers also stated the following reasons for feeling unsafe at work: *a structure practicing favoritism and not valuing worthiness* (5), *frequent changes in the education system* (3), *irregularities not being fixed* (2), *ministry acting to get students graduated not matter what it takes* (2), *very flexible discipline regulations* (2), *inattentive ministry not controlling education and instruction and not following up* (2), *inadequate resources provided to schools* (2), *curriculum far from the school level*, and *frequently replaced minister of national education*.

Teachers stated that they felt unsafe mostly due to *insensible people with low education levels around* (10) and *school not located in a good environment* (6). In addition, teachers stated that they felt unsafe further due to the following reasons: *violence in the environment* (4), *strangers, around the school, occasionally harming the students* (4), *the lost respect towards teachers* (2), and *low socio-economic status of teachers* (2). Teacher m8 added *mass media placing violence in people's agenda*, and teacher c2 included *disbelief in education* as reasons for feeling unsafe.

Interviewees mostly stated their *inadequate experience* (4) and *decrease in motivation due to economic problems* (3) as distrust reasons based on teachers themselves. In addition, they stated the following distrust reasons, based on teachers themselves: *exhaustion and reluctance* (3), *occasional sudden reactions, with nerves on edge* (2), and *being unable to tolerate unfairness* (2). Teacher ab7 added *upon being raised and educated in the west, not being able to adjust to the local culture*, teacher

v2 mentioned *starting to act selfishly*, and teacher m6 included *being sharp-tongued* among reasons for feeling unsafe.

In addition, high school teachers listed the following in relation to distrust: inequality in education in Turkey; increasing distance between the west and the east (teacher h3) and discipline regulations without deterrence (teacher ms4).

## **The Reasons Why High School Teachers Felt Safe and Unsafe in relation to High School Type**

The reasons why teachers felt safe and unsafe were examined in relation to general, Anatolian, and vocational high school types.

### **General High Schools**

General high school teachers mostly stated the following as reasons why they felt safe: *administrators fulfilling their duties (10), attentive, sensitive, understanding, unbiased, and tolerant administrators who listen to teachers (10), and who support and help them about anything (8); an established school respected by those around (5); sincere relationships based on love and respect among teachers (9); support and solidarity among teachers (7); respectful and polite students (17); some attentive parents who help teachers (10); City Directorate of National Education not practicing favoritism (3); ministry viewing the problem with an unbiased lens (2); safe school environments (7); and professionally efficient teachers satisfactorily fulfilling their duties (9).*

General high school teachers mostly stated the following as reasons why they felt unsafe: *inefficient administrators (5), cultural conflict (6), cliques among teachers (5), teachers' professional inefficiencies (5), students with potential for fight and crime and inclination for violence (11), inattentive and insensitive parents (13), inattentive and insensitive City Directorate of National Education (5), ministry not adequately valuing teachers (7), teachers' inadequate salaries and employee personal rights (7), not a good environment around the school (4), teachers' low levels of education and insensible teachers (4), and interviewee's lack of experience (4).*

### **Anatolian High Schools**

Anatolian high school teachers mostly stated the following as reasons why they felt safe: *attentive, sensitive, understanding, unbiased, and tolerant administrators who listen to teachers (6), an established school respected by those around (4), sincere relationships based on love and respect among teachers (5), high achieving students admitted through test (7), sensible and wise parents (4), and professionally efficient interviewees satisfactorily fulfilling their duties (5).*

Anatolian high school teachers mostly stated the following as reasons why they felt unsafe: *inefficient administrators (3), inattentive and insensitive parents (4), and a structure practicing favoritism and not valuing merit (5).*

### **Vocational High Schools**

Vocational high school teachers mostly stated the following as reasons why they felt safe: *administrators supporting and helping teachers with any issues (8), an established school respected by those around (4), support and solidarity among teachers (6), respectful and polite students (5), a safe environment around the school (5), and professionally efficient teachers satisfactorily fulfilling their duties (4).*

Vocational high school teachers mostly stated the following as reasons why they felt unsafe: *favoritism* (4), *cliques among teachers* (3), *students' low and inadequate levels of education* (4), *students with potential for fight and crime and inclination for violence* (4), *inattentive, insensitive, and insensible parents* (9) with low levels of education (5).

### **The Reasons Why High School Teachers Felt Safe and Unsafe in relation to Gender**

Among female teachers, the most frequently stated reason why they felt safe was about *administrators fulfilling their duties* (4) whereas male teachers stated that they felt safe if *the administrators listen to the teachers and is attentive, sensitive, understanding, unbiased, and tolerant* (18). Both female and male teachers stated the following reasons why they felt safe at school: *the school as an established institution respected by those around, sincere relationships based on love and respect, respectful and polite students, and professionally efficient teachers who fulfill their duties*. Male teachers mostly stated the following reasons why they felt safe: *some attentive parents helping the teachers* (11), *ministry applications supporting teachers*, and *safe environment around the school*. However, female teachers' views could not form a consensus about why they felt safe.

Both female and male teachers stated that they felt unsafe when the following occurred: *cliques among teachers, students with potential for fight and crime and inclination for violence, inattentive and insensitive parents, and teachers' inadequate salaries and employee personal rights*. Female teachers mostly stated *the school not being in a good environment* as reason why they felt unsafe whereas male teachers said that they felt unsafe because *those around were insensible with low levels of education*. Male teachers mostly stated that they felt unsafe due to *inefficient administrators and inattentive and insensitive City Directorate of National Education*. However, female teachers' views could not form a consensus about why they felt unsafe.

### **The Reasons Why High School Teachers Felt Safe and Unsafe in relation to Seniority**

All seniority groups mostly stated that they felt safe for the following reasons: *the school as an established institution respected by those around, respectful and polite students, and professionally efficient teachers satisfactorily fulfilling their duties*. The teachers within 0-5 and 6-10 years seniority group mostly stated that they felt safe when *the administrators listened to the teachers and were attentive, sensitive, understanding, unbiased, and tolerant, when the relationships among teachers were sincere, and based on love and respect, and the environment around the school was safe*. However, views of teachers within 11-and-more-year seniority group did not form a consensus. 0-5-year seniority group mostly stated that they felt safe when *the parents were sensible and wise* whereas 6-10-year-and-more group felt safe when *some parents were attentive and helped teachers*.

All seniority groups stated that they felt unsafe with *inattentive and insensitive parents*. Teachers in both 0-to-5 and 6-to-10-year groups mostly stated that they felt unsafe for the following reasons: *cliques among teachers, students with potential for fight and crime and inclination for violence, and inadequate salaries and employee personal rights*. However, the views of 11-year-and-over group teachers did not form a consensus. Teachers in the 6-to-10-year seniority group mostly stated that they felt unsafe when *their administrators were inefficient* and when teachers had *cultural conflict* but the views of other seniority groups did not form a consensus on that.

## DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, high school teachers stated some views on the reasons for trust and distrust. It is considered significant what views teachers mostly emphasized. Frequencies of views that teachers stated about the reasons for trust and distrust are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Frequencies of high school teachers' views on the reasons for trust and distrust

Reasons for trust and distrust	Frequency of views on trust		Frequency of views on distrust		Total
	f	%	f	%	
Administrator	72	52.2	31	22.5	103
School culture	20	14.5	13	9.4	33
Teacher	61	44.2	28	20.3	89
Students	48	34.8	55	39.9	103
Parents	27	19.6	52	37.7	79
City Directorate of NE	12	8.7	25	18.1	37
Ministry	14	10.1	38	27.5	52
Environment	19	13.8	31	22.5	50
Interviewee	41	29.7	17	12.3	58
Total	314		290		604

N=138

As seen in Table 1, high school teachers stated more reasons for trust in total. Teachers stated reasons for trust and distrust mostly in relation to administrators (103) and students (103); then, respectively, teachers (89), parents (79), interviewees (58), ministry (52), environment (50), city directorate of national education (37), and school culture (33). Teachers stated reasons for trust mostly in relation to administrators (72), teachers (61), students (48), and interviewees (41) and reasons for distrust mostly in relation to students (55), parents (52), ministry (38), administrators (31), and environment (31).

As can be observed, teachers' views on trust or distrust may be considered their perception of the points representing safety and unsafety. Namely, teachers' views may indicate that teachers had the most trust issues with administrators and students and the least trust issues with the city directorate of national education and the school culture. Low level of trust issues with the school culture actually attracts attention. This may mean that teachers do not know what is included in the school culture because, during the data collection process, teachers often asked the researcher about what was included in the school culture.

In the current study, teachers in general complained about inefficient administrators acting biased. In Memduhoğlu and Zengin's (2009) study conducted with Van elementary teachers, teachers also stated that the school administrators were the least fair and unbiased. Similarly, in Erdem's (2008) study on general high schools around Turkey, teachers stated that they felt unsafe when their administrators were unfair and biased and practiced favoritism.

Teachers stated that they felt unsafe when students had potential for fight and crime and inclination for violence. In Karataş' (2008) study also, more than half number of teachers in Ankara stated that students committed crime at school and acted violently. Similarly in Sarpkaya (2005, 242) and Karataş (2008) studies, teachers complained about inefficient rules for discipline and stated that a better understanding of discipline would prevent violence.

Teachers stated that they felt unsafe when parents were inattentive, insensible, insensitive, and aggressive. In Geyin's (2007) study, as in the findings of the current research, teachers listed the incident when parents attacked the school administrator among reasons for feelings of distrust. At the same time, the weak relationships among parents, teachers, and students were considered associated with violence (Kepenekçi & Çınkır, 2006). As in studies on particularly job satisfaction, the quality of

job life (Erdem, 2008), and salaries, in the current research also, teachers complained about inadequate salaries and employee personal rights.

### **In relation to high school type:**

In the current study, both general and vocational high school teachers stated that they felt safe *when students were respectful and polite* whereas Anatolian high school teachers stated that they felt safe *when the students were admitted through a test*. Similar to the findings of the current study, teachers said that they felt safe mostly when students were respectful towards school staff in Karataş' study (2008) on general high schools in Keçiören, Ankara.

Both general and Anatolian high school teachers stated that they felt unsafe *when administrators were inefficient* whereas vocational high school teachers said that they felt unsafe *when their administrators practiced favoritism*. Similar to the findings of the current study, teachers stated that they felt unsafe when the administrators inefficiently supervised and controlled and inefficiently implemented the discipline measures in Dönmez and Güven's (2002) study.

General high school teachers stated that they felt unsafe when the students were *aggressive with potential for fight and crime and had inclination for violence* whereas vocational high school teachers said that they felt unsafe *when the students' levels were low and inadequate*. Similar to the findings of the current study, in Erdem's (2008) study, teachers stated that they mostly felt unsafe due to acts of violence among students. Similarly, Dönmez and Güven's (2002) study conducted in Malatya found that teachers felt unsafe due to threatening by students, fights among students, and teacher-students conflicts. Geyin's study (2007) lists the safety issues experienced by general high school teachers as follows: students keeping dangerous materials such as knife or pocket knife on them, violence among students, students fighting within the school, and students beating teachers. In Öğülmüş's (1995) study conducted about violence and aggressiveness in high schools, many students stated that there were fights outside the school borders and some students were injured. The same study indicated that general high schools more than the vocational high schools had similar issues. Students stated that there were physical attacks on teachers in many high schools. The same study found that there were more physical attacks on teachers by students in general high schools than vocational high schools.

General high school teachers stated that they felt unsafe *when the school was not in a very good environment* whereas vocational high school teachers said that they felt unsafe with *low levels of education without any awareness*. Teachers listed factors in the environment and the cultural characteristics as the most important issue impacting the trust of the school and stated that they felt unsafe with those around with low levels of education without awareness. In Geyin's (2007) and Dönmez and Güven's (2003) studies on high schools, teachers stated that they felt unsafe when some people around the school disturbed students. The disconnections between the school and the society as well as the decrease in ownership by the society are considered among the factors leading to violence and bullying at schools (Kepenekçi & Çınkır, 2006).

There was no significant difference in total found in the study conducted by Özer et al. (2006) on trust in general. However, on lower dimensions, there was a significant difference on the trust towards parents and students between the vocational and other high schools. Level of trust in vocational high schools was found higher than those in other high schools.

### **In relation to gender:**

Female teachers stated different views than males did *on reasons why they felt safe* in relation to administrators, parents, ministry, and environment around the school. They shared the same views with male teachers in relation to school culture, teachers, students, and the interviewees.

*On reasons why they felt unsafe*, female teachers stated different views than male teachers did in relation to administrators, city directorate of national education, and the environment around the school. Female teachers shared similar views with the male teachers about teachers, students, parents, and the ministry.

Polat (2007), Geyin (2007), and Özer et al.'s (2006) studies on trust found that male teachers had higher perception of trust than female teachers did. Male teachers had particularly higher levels of trust towards administrators. Researchers thought that this may have been associated with better relationships with male administrators outnumbering female administrators. Yılmaz's (2005) and Çokluk-Bökeoğlu and Yılmaz's (2008) studies did not find such significant difference; however, male teachers' levels of trust toward administrators were found to be relatively higher.

### **In relation to seniority:**

*On feeling safe*, teachers in the 0-to-5 and 6-to-10-year seniority groups mentioned reasons associated with teachers, administrators, and the environment around the school, differently from the views of teachers in the 11 years-and-over group. However, teachers in all groups shared the same views on the reasons associated with the school culture, students, and the interviewees.

*On feeling unsafe*, teachers in the 0-to-5 and 6-to-10-year groups mentioned reasons with teachers and the ministry, differently from the views of teachers in the 11 years-and-over group. However, teachers in all groups shared the same views on the reasons associated with parents.

Geyin (2007) and Özer et al.'s (2006) findings showed that teachers in the beginning years had less trust in administrators than teachers in other seniority groups did. However, Polat's (2007) study found just the opposite. Memduhoğlu and Zengin (2009), Çokluk-Bökeoğlu and Yılmaz (2008), and Yılmaz (2005) studies did not find a significant difference between female and male teachers.

In the current study, the following points that teachers listed associated with trust attracted attention: favoritism, cultural conflict, cliques among teachers, language issues, and some local differences. In the studies conducted on trust, a significant difference in relation to variables of number of teachers and school size in general was found. Level of trust is higher in schools with less numbers of teachers and students whereas it is lower in schools with higher numbers of teachers and students (Polat 2007; Özer et al., 2006, Çokluk-Bökeoğlu & Yılmaz 2008, Geyin 2007). The current study did not examine the levels of trust in relation to the number of teachers and students because general and vocational schools often have higher numbers of teachers and students whereas Anatolian high schools have less numbers of those. Therefore, it was not possible to run a comparison on teachers and students in the current research.

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