

The Influence of Workplace Human Relations on Kindergarten Teachers' Work Morale and Motivation

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1. Introduction

In this study, we focused on the influence of a kindergarten workplace environment on the teachers' motivation to work and investigated the kindergartens' status as organizational groups and the individuals' motivation and sense of satisfaction with their work. The study describes these ongoing investigations and includes our discussions. We investigated the same three kindergartens twice, in June 2016 and March 2018.

The survey in 2016 revealed that teachers' motivation and sense of satisfaction with their work was affected by the work environment and human relations in the workplace. Whether or not these human relations and the working environment were related to the teachers' rate of turnover was left as an issue to be studied. To tackle this issue, we examine, in this paper, the second survey, conducted in 2018, by comparing it to the first survey, and discuss our findings.

Kawamura (2017) states that, generally speaking, teachers who work at kindergartens that have a low turnover rate “show a strong motivation to autonomously continue studying, aiming at enhancing their educational practices, as well as high-level actions and behaviors (autonomy and enhancement). Regarding the educational activities of the kindergarten as a whole, moreover, the kindergarten has a high level of awareness and actions/behaviors related to collegiality and cooperativeness to ensure that such activities can be carried out in an organizational fashion (collegiality and cooperativeness)” (Kawamura, 2017, p. 38). Workplace groups of kindergartens with a low turnover rate realize an environment in which the teachers themselves spontaneously feel that they want to work. It is necessary that (a) physical/material and human environments are rich and satisfying, (b) human relations within the workplace

are stable, (c) a favorable workplace environment and human relations with a low “victim mentality” have been built, and (d) safety is being guaranteed.

Our 2016 survey revealed that, of the kindergartens targeted for our surveys, those with a high rate of turnover faced common problems (Yamawaki, 2016). For example, it was found that the head teacher had a significant impact on the other teachers, and that problems were seen in the way these teachers were involved within the workplace. Because of the roles they need to play, head teachers are in a position to provide instructions and advice to homeroom teachers. Therefore, in caregiving situations, they often conduct interventions and provide advice by way of issuing instructions; they sometimes provide direct instructions to homeroom teachers about the latter's classroom management. In this case, homeroom teachers have their own perspectives on how they are in charge of their class, and if they judge that the head teacher's instructions and advice are inappropriate, they may end up losing their will to work and their confidence in teaching and interacting with the children, feeling cowed as a result. After the study, the kindergartens that were covered in the survey enacted measures to manage various problems and arranged personnel transfers, such as job rotation, within the workplace.

In this study, therefore, we used the findings obtained in the 2018 survey to examine how the human relations inside the kindergarten had changed after being subject to these measures, and which changes, if any, were seen in the motivation of the teachers themselves to work, and in the individuals' feelings of worthwhileness of their work. We then compared and examined the results of the 2018 survey data with those of the 2016 survey data.

2. Methods

The kindergartens covered in the 2018 survey were the same as those in the June 2016 survey. Three private kindergartens in Aichi Prefecture were asked to take part in the study, and, with their consent, a survey was conducted. The targets of the questionnaire survey were the teachers who worked at these kindergartens. A total of 33 kindergarten teachers (hereinafter, “teachers”) took part in the survey. They

comprised 10 teachers from Kindergarten A, 11 from Kindergarten B, and 12 from Kindergarten C. The survey was carried out over a period of one week from March 20 to 27, 2018, with the investigators visiting each kindergarten. As the method of survey, Hyper-Questionnaire-Utilities question sheets (partially modified; comprising 58 items and free comments) were used.

2. 1. Ethical considerations

In this survey, the views of each individual are written on a questionnaire sheet, and a description of the individuals' feelings is also shown. The survey administrators therefore collected the questionnaire sheets directly at the venue, in order to ensure the survey's confidentiality. In distributing the questionnaire sheets to the subjects, we handed out survey request sheets and envelopes used for collection, and informed the subjects that the sheets would be collected individually after they had been filled out. The subjects, moreover, were told that these data results would be analyzed and examined in this study, and published only after the data had been anonymized. They were also informed that the data results would not be used for purposes other than this study, and that a paper that had summarized the findings as research accomplishments would be written and distributed. The subjects gave their consent to the above processes.

2. 2. What is the Hyper-Questionnaire-Utilities (Hyper-Q-U)?

The Hyper-Questionnaire-Utilities (hereinafter, "Hyper-Q-U") is a scale for analyzing classroom groups with the purpose of promoting a better school life. It was developed by Dr. Shigeo Kawamura, professor and member of Waseda University's Education and Integrated Arts and Sciences Academic Committee, with the aim of having it contribute to enhanced practices at educational sites. The Hyper-Q-U, a standardized psychology test, is a questionnaire that investigates the degree of satisfaction of a group. As an assessment method for objectively supplementing information that a teacher has obtained through interviews and observations, it is widely used at educational sites throughout Japan to realize better educational practices (Kawamura, 2015).

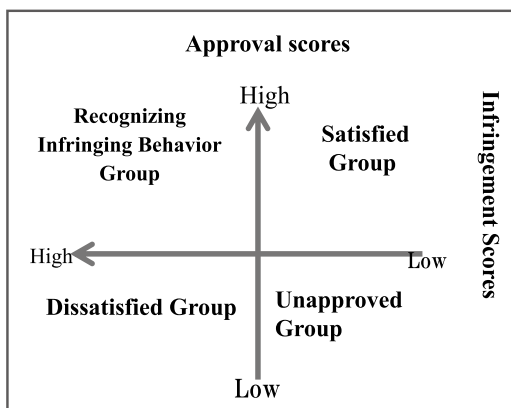
The Hyper-Q-U measures a child's degree of satisfaction with his or her school life, and his/her motivation and sense of fulfillment of school life, according to area. At the same time, based on the distribution status of a child's degree of satisfaction in the classroom, it can infer the status of classroom groups, and may be used as a guideline for preventing breakdowns in classroom discipline and for ensuring appropriate classroom management (Kawamura and Tagami, 1997; Kawamura, 1999b).

This study used Hyper-Q-U's test paper targeting middle school students, and redesigned it for use of adult workplace groups.

3. Results

3. 1. Displaying of Hyper-Q-U's results

The results of Hyper-Q-U are shown by each responder's position in four quadrants on rectangular coordinates, as well as by overall distribution tendencies. The "infringement scores" indicated on the horizontal and vertical axes of the rectangular coordinates show, respectively, whether or not rules have been established inside the workplace, and whether or not affinity-type human relations have been established (Figure 1).



○ The quadrant on the top right is called the "satisfied" group. Respondents who are positioned in this quadrant feel that they belong inside the workplace and are believed to feel motivated within the workplace.

Figure 1. Display of Hyper-Q-U's results (Kawamura, 2007, 2014^b, 2015)

○ The quadrant on the bottom right is called the "unapproved" group. Respondents who are positioned in this quadrant are not very likely to feel intense anxiety in the

workplace. However, they are rarely, if ever, appreciated or given approval at the workplace, and their loss of motivation in the workplace is believed to affect their work performance.

○ The quadrant on the top right is called the “recognizing infringing behavior” group. Respondents here manage their jobs actively at the workplace, but are believed to often cause problems in the course of doing so. They may also react overly sensitively to various matters.

○ The quadrant on the bottom left is called the “dissatisfied” group. Respondents positioned in this quadrant do not feel that they have a place in the workplace where they feel they belong, and they are believed to be liable to suffer anxiety and tension in their life within the workplace. There is also a risk that they are being unbearably harassed, bullied, or targeted for pranks, among other things. In some cases, urgent action may be required if an individual is unable to adapt or successfully fit in at their workplace.

3. 2. Results for Kindergarten A

(1) From a problem-laden teacher organization to a constructive teacher organization

In the 2016 survey, Kindergarten A resembled a classroom group described as “educational environment in decline (collapse type)” (Figure 2). This type of

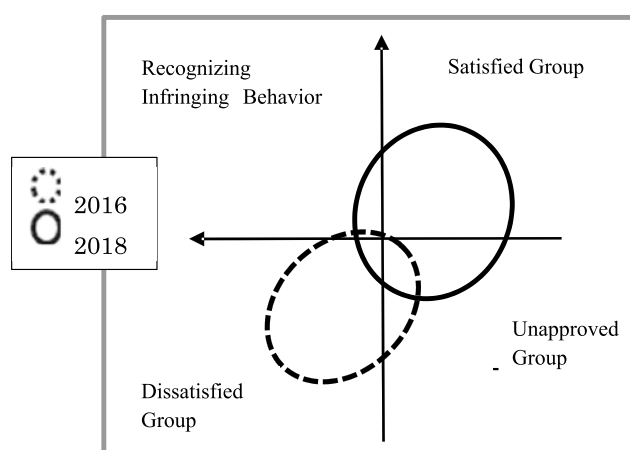


Figure 2. Results of Kindergarten A's survey of places worth working in (2016-2018)

kindergarten is in a state where it cannot offer educational and childcare activities as a group, and whose functions as a workplace group have not been established.

The workplace group of Kindergarten A at the time of the 2016 survey showed that no affinity-type human relations had been established, and that the

workplace was dominated by teachers who enforced a top-down approach. The mood of the teacher group reflected a situation in which most teachers rejected the instructions of legitimate leader teachers and agreed to go along with the instructions of the overbearing leader teacher instead. Educational activities were being carried out that were based on individual teachers' personal views, and educational accomplishments were low. However, various teachers thought that the problem was being caused by educational policies, the community and the children, as well as the teachers in administrative positions, showing a situation with people who lacked the ability to self-scrutinize.

The results of the 2018 survey, in contrast, resembled an "affinity-type" classroom group in which the approval scores had risen overall, and infringement scores had dropped (Figure 1). "Affinity-type" indicates a well-managed and disciplined group whose individual members are strongly motivated. The mood of Kindergarten A has become dramatically calmer and friendlier, with changes becoming apparent in the teachers. Their awareness is now more focused on the kindergarten's goals and the methods needed to attain them; teamwork has improved; and the teachers support each other and learn from one another. The mood and energy available to enhance the educational practice of the kindergarten as a whole is now being seen in each teacher's activities.

Table 1. Approval and infringement scores of the teachers working in Kindergarten A

	Teacher A		Teacher B		Teacher C		Teacher D		Teacher E		Teacher F	
Survey year	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018
Approval score	32	35	NA	24	32	34	34	34	30	34	37	41
Infringement score	19	17	NA	24	36	17	20	13	32	21	33	17

Table 1 shows the results of comparing the "approval" and "infringement" scores of Kindergarten A's teachers, obtained in the first survey conducted in 2016 and in the second survey conducted in 2018. The "approval" scores indicate a sense of being

recognized and approved at the workplace, with 50 points as the highest score. An “infringement” score is 10 points if there are no infringements and other problems caused, but it rises if an individual becomes subject to them. This score represents the status of each teacher in terms of his/her awareness and behaviors toward his/her work and activities in the workplace.

At Kindergarten A, five teachers took part in the first and second surveys. Since Teacher B was hired to work at Kindergarten A in 2017, there are no survey results for that individual for 2016. Of the five teachers who took part in the two surveys, four saw their “approval” scores rise. The “infringement” scores dropped for all five teachers. Four teachers shifted to the “satisfied” group from the three other groups. It was found that, at this workplace, the proportion of teachers in the “satisfied” group rose sharply, from 33 % in the first survey to 80 % in the second. (It should be noted however, that newcomer Teacher B was in the “dissatisfied” group in the 2018 survey.) It can be said that, as a result, motivation toward work rose in the workplace, and the workplace environment improved.

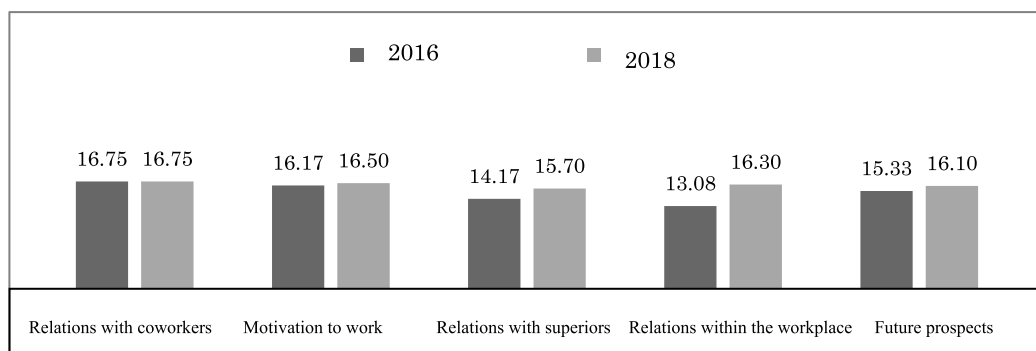


Figure 3. Results of an awareness survey on work conducted in Kindergarten A

(2) Results of the awareness survey on work conducted in Kindergarten A

Next, let us look at the results of a survey on the awareness of work in Kindergarten A (Figure 3). The highest score for each item is 20 points.

Most of the teachers in Kindergarten A were in the “satisfied” group. The reasons are as follows: (a) In terms of “relations within the workplace,” the teachers’ personal

awareness of the workplace rose. Their motivation to engage with events and activities increased, and they became able to perceive the workplace as friendly, and feel cheerful and at ease. (b) Scores for “relations with superiors” rose, and the teachers became more able to discuss and seek advice about their own problems, and to talk informally with senior teachers. They also became able to remain true to themselves and behave naturally, even in front of the kindergarten principal. (c) As for their “future prospects,” they became able to hold interests, dreams, and hopes with respect to their current thoughts toward work and their work as kindergarten teachers.

3. 3. Results for Kindergarten B

(1) From a vertical-type teacher organization to a constructive teacher organization

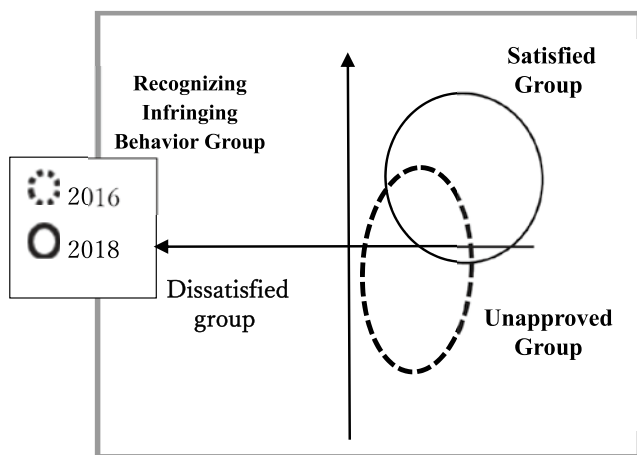


Figure 4. Results of Kindergarten B's survey as a place worth working in (2016-2018)

In the 2016 survey, Kindergarten B's teacher group resembled a “stiff-type” classroom group (Figure 4). A “stiff type” indicates the characteristic of a group that is well-managed and disciplined and is solid and stable overall. There are stages in the feeling of satisfaction and a sense of being recognized and approved (approval scores).

A basic methodology takes hold among the teachers, of attaining the kindergarten's goals, and the group of teachers had carried out activities in an organizational fashion, following the instructions of a teacher who had assumed a leader-like role. However, other than a small group of teachers, most showed a tendency of having little or no sense of being recognized and/or approved and felt as if they were being half-forced to do their work. There was also a distance in terms of the relationships between the

teachers, and many of the practical educational activities appeared as if each teacher was given a role to play and they fulfilled it simply to satisfy their quota. Despite busily tackling such activities, their educational results were merely average.

Table 2. Approval and infringement scores of the teachers working in Kindergarten B

	Teacher A		Teacher B		Teacher C		Teacher D		Teacher E	
Survey year	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018	2016	2018
Approval score	27	38	34	38	29	30	32	38	35	37
Infringement score	13	24	16	14	30	27	21	15	27	16

Table 2 shows the results of comparing the approval and infringement scores of Kindergarten B's teachers, obtained in the two surveys conducted in 2016 and 2018. The approval scores indicate a sense of being recognized and approved at the workplace, with 50 points as the highest score. An infringement score is 10 points if there are no infringements or other problem behaviors but rises if an individual becomes subject to such behaviors. This score represents the status of each teacher in terms of his/her awareness and behaviors toward his/her work and activities at the kindergarten.

The results of the first survey showed that, in Kindergarten B, 28% belonged to the "satisfied" group, and 33% to the "unapproved" group, indicating that it had become a "vertical-type organization showing stiffness." In the second survey, the ratio in the "satisfied" group rose to 68%, showing that the organization had changed to an "affinity type," with only one individual in the "unapproved" group. At this kindergarten, of the five teachers in the "satisfied" group in the first survey, four had moved, indicating that teachers in other groups had shifted to the "satisfied" group in the second survey.

In the 2018 survey, the results of Kindergarten B resembled an "affinity-type" classroom group (Figure 2). The teachers' awareness had become focused on the kindergarten's goals and methods to attain them; teamwork improved; and the teachers supported each other and learned from one another. The mood and energy for enhancing the educational practice of the kindergarten as a whole began to be

seen in each teacher's activities. The educational goals and the methods to attain them were being shared by all the teachers. There is now a strong sense of teamwork; the teachers support and learn from one another; there is also a mood that promotes the enhancement of the educational practices of the kindergarten. Each teacher is carrying out activities in a spontaneous fashion.

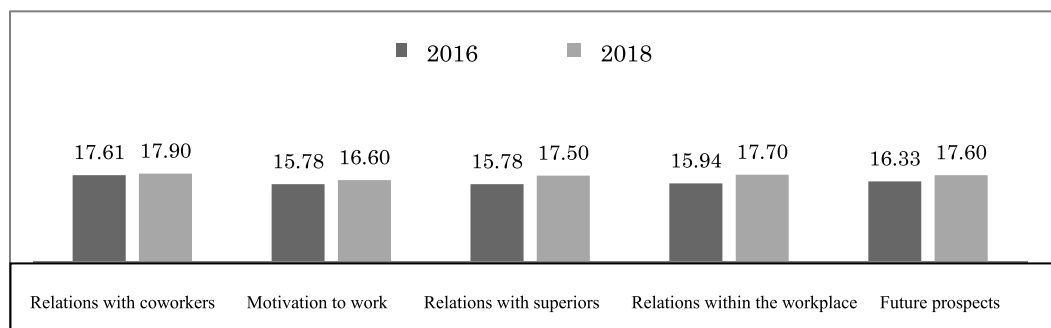


Figure 5. Results of the awareness survey on work conducted in Kindergarten B

(2) Results of an awareness survey on work conducted in Kindergarten B

Next, let us examine the results of a survey on the awareness of work at Kindergarten B (Figure 5). The teachers' awareness of work at the workplace had risen for all five items in the second survey compared to the first. Although the highest score for each item is 20 points, the score for four items exceeds 17 points, indicating a high level of awareness on the part of the teachers. As a result, it was revealed that (a) work is being carried out efficiently, since a set of rules is inherent inside the workplace. Because of this, work motivation has risen in many teachers; (b) the personnel environment inside the workplace has been stabilized and improved, and an even better workplace environment is shown; (c) because the workplace environment has stabilized, human relations have become favorable, allowing the teachers to hold future dreams and hopes for their work, and to feel relaxed and cheerful in their workplace.

3. 4. Results for Kindergarten C

(1) From a stagnant teacher organization to an organization that remains stagnant

In the 2016 survey, Kindergarten C resembled a classroom group described as a

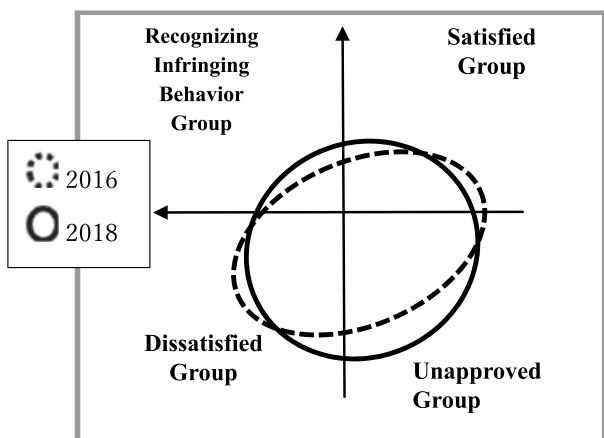


Figure 6. Results of Kindergarten C's survey as a place worth working in (2016-2018)

combination of “loose type” and “unstable type” (Figure 6). “Loose type” refers to a group lacking rules, with many of its members acting and behaving selfishly. “Unstable type” refers to a group that is unstable overall, with its individual members lacking motivation or a cooperative spirit.

It was believed that, at the time of the 2016 survey, the teachers at Kindergarten C had little sense of being approved or appreciated, with wide differences being seen in the levels of enthusiasm and cooperative spirit between the teachers themselves, making it difficult for them to carry out unified actions and behaviors. The mood of the teacher group had become vague, partly because of the instructions given by the teacher assuming the leader role, with the kindergarten in a state of not working together overall. Educational achievements were said to be at a low level, and numerous problems had occurred, with each teacher doing the minimum amount of work assigned to him/her and merely fulfilling his/her quotas. The teachers exhibited a lack of mutual trust, and, because of this, there were situations in which the teachers failed to demonstrate suitable management and discipline. However, there was a sense of making outside appeals, such as to the local community and parents/guardians, so it appeared that the teachers had mistakenly regarded outside evaluations as assessment of their work as a teacher.

The results of the 2018 survey of Kindergarten C showed an overall plot that resembled that of the results of the 2016 survey. It can be read that the mood of the teacher group had become vague, partly because of the instructions given by the teacher assuming the leader role, with the kindergarten in a state of not working together overall. Educational achievements were said to be at a low level, and numerous

problems have occurred. It can also be said that each teacher was doing a minimum amount of work assigned to him/her, merely to fulfill his/her quotas.

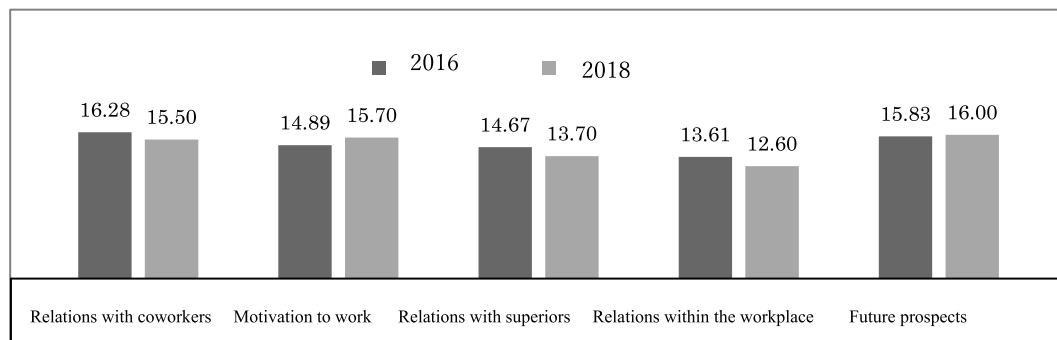


Figure 7. Results of the awareness survey on work conducted in Kindergarten C

(2) Results of the awareness survey on work conducted in Kindergarten C

Next, let us look at the results of the survey on the awareness of work in Kindergarten C (Figure 7). A fairly noticeable rise was seen in the teachers' awareness of work in the workplace in the second survey compared to the first in terms of individuals' motivation toward work and future prospects; however, the scores for the three other items fell. A declining tendency was also seen in the human relations within the workplace, such as with senior teachers, superiors, and coworkers. In particular, (a) the sense of being approved and recognized was low throughout the workplace, and considerable variations were seen among individual teachers in terms of motivation toward work, with some staff members showing high anxiety tendencies. Therefore, variations were seen in the workplace as a whole, and differences were seen among individuals in terms of motivation and enthusiasm toward work. (b) At first glance, the workplace appears to be free and relaxed. However, since no set direction as a kindergarten can be seen, there is no unity between the teachers. They are divided into several groups according to their opinions and emotional levels. (c) Since the group lacks direction, the teachers are keeping each other in check; they are no longer able to recognize or approve of each other, weakening the relationship of trust as a result. (d) Since the workplace rules have stagnated, there is also a tendency for the teachers'

motivation to dissipate during work, and for numerous personal conversations and minor problems/quarrels to occur frequently between coworkers.

4. Discussion

Measures carried out in target kindergartens between the 2016 survey and the 2018 survey, as well as the changes that have occurred

We implemented our first survey from June to July of 2016. We analyzed and examined the results, reported “the current status and tasks/challenges as seen from the data” to various kindergarten principals, and proposed actions to be taken in the future. We also reported these data results to the head of the academic organization that governs the surveyed kindergartens. Regarding the actual status and future tasks/challenges of each kindergarten, we proposed some basic views on the creation of an organization, improvements, and other measures.

We implemented a second survey in March 2018, at the same three kindergartens that were targeted in the first survey. Some kindergartens showed marked changes in the status of the workplace groups in response to our proposals and various measures carried out in the wake of the first survey. The measures carried out at each kindergarten, as well as the changes that have since taken place, are discussed below.

4. 1. Measures carried out at Kindergarten A and changes that have occurred

Personnel transfers took place at Kindergarten A. The head teacher, who had worked as a core staff member, retired from work, and a new teacher was transferred from Kindergarten B and took on the role of head teacher. As a result, the second survey showed dramatic enhancements in the teachers’ relationships with their superiors as well as in the relationships within the workplace, and the human relations of all the staff members improved. These results, moreover, were connected to the staff turnover rate. Although numerous kindergarten teachers have been leaving the workplace each year, the number of people quitting their jobs decreased from 2016 to 2018. However, since some teachers are showing stagnation in their human relations as an individual, the average scores for “relations with coworkers in the workplace” remained unchanged.

4. 2. Measures carried out at Kindergarten B and changes that have occurred

Kindergarten B had favorable human relations among the teachers to begin with. However, the results show that human relations have become even stronger. At this kindergarten, the head teacher was transferred to a different kindergarten. As a result of the core teacher transfer, solidarity with other teachers was boosted, and cooperativeness and unity among the teachers became further enhanced. These changes led to enhancement as a group organization, with the kindergarten continuing to evolve into an "affinity-type" group organization. Almost no teachers left this kindergarten between 2016 and 2018.

4. 3. Measures carried out at Kindergarten C and changes that have occurred

In 2016, Kindergarten C was a group that was unstable overall; individual teachers lacked motivation and energy, and no group cooperativeness was seen. The kindergarten principal did not take charge very successfully. The results of the 2018 survey found variations in terms of individual teachers' motivation toward work, with some staff members exhibiting high anxiety. Therefore, variations were seen in the workplace as a whole, and differences were seen among individuals in terms of motivation and enthusiasm toward work. The results for this kindergarten therefore indicated an organization in which the individuals had dispersed and scattered. Relations between the teachers became weaker, moreover, with staffers being polarized between those who were satisfied and those who were not. As a result, the turnover rate rose considerably from 2016 to 2018. Because the principal was switched, and because five teachers quit their jobs, it was expected that the kindergarten would change its workplace environment. However, no significant leaps have been made, and the status quo continues to this day.

5. Comprehensive considerations

We focused on the creation of organizations of teacher groups at three kindergartens and continued to investigate the current status and tasks/challenges they faced for

a period of two years. As a result, the teachers' motivations toward their work and feelings of the worthwhileness of their work became clear. To change the workplace environment, it is necessary to take note of the human environment and create an improved workplace environment. As measures to make these changes take place, it appears that motivation and willingness on the part of the teachers to work will lead to an optimistic outlook for the future, such as fostering individual teachers' forward-looking awareness of trying to move upward at all times, as well as the profiles of teachers who continue to grow toward the future. Of the three kindergartens, two implemented workplace reforms and were able to see their effects. However, similar effects could not be obtained with the one other kindergarten.

As future tasks and challenges, there is a need to look at each kindergarten's results, and closely examine the individual teachers' status and performance in the form of numerical figures, from the overall pattern to the individual characteristics, by asking questions such as "Are there any teachers who, despite being positioned in the 'satisfied' group inside the workplace, are stagnating in terms of motivation and enthusiasm toward work?" and "Do each individual's results reflect a well-balanced state?"

In the case of a kindergarten for which no changes can be expected to occur, the principal must obtain a detailed understanding of each individual teacher, and reform the workplace environment to allow individual teachers' self-realization. Another challenge is to discontinue top-down policies advocated by leaders, and instead create an organizational constitution within which each teacher thinks and works on his/her own. Additionally, to improve relations within the workplace, it may be necessary to repair and restore human relationships through training.

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職場の人間関係が幼稚園教諭の就労意欲に及ぼす影響

山脇 真弓*

本研究では、前年度の研究に引き継ぎ、職場集団における人間関係に注目し、調査研究を行うことにした。前回の調査で使用したQ-Uの調査用紙を使用し、今年度も調査を行った。調査の結果、児童・生徒に行っている学級集団の研究と類似した結果を示している (e.g., Kawamura & Takami, 1997; Kawamura, 1999)。つまり、先行研究で示された学級集団で、成熟度の状態が今回の幼稚園教員集団と類似していることがわかった。つまり、集団組織が成熟していない組織ほど人間関係が希薄で、離職率が高かった。

これらのことから、幼稚園教諭の組織集団は、職員集団の状態が低下している組織ほど、離職意欲が高く、集団の状態と離職には相関があることが示唆されたいえる。

キーワード：保育者、幼稚園教諭、人間関係、就労意欲

