

# Organism Metaphor And Its Effects On Educational Organizations

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## Abstract

A metaphor is the description of a social reality figuratively through similes. Metaphors look at organizations from different perspectives and thus secure that different aspects of organizations are revealed. Based on literature review, this study focuses on organism metaphor likening an organization to a bush; and it considers briefly theories concerning and approaches to metaphor. This study also discusses the effects of organism metaphor on educational organizations. Even though organism metaphor is criticized for such reasons as ignoring the activities of organization employees in the process of adaptation to the environment and not considering organizational conflicts and organizational division, its contributions to the field of management cannot be denied. Organism metaphor has introduced clarity and flexibility into management. Besides, it is also valuable due to the fact that it emphasizes the importance of interaction between organizations and their close environment, of human relations in organizations and of relations between organizations.

**Keywords:** Metaphor, organism metaphor, educational organizations

## 1. Introduction

As is commonly known, organisations are the structures whose primary purpose is to survive, which are in constant interaction with their environment and whose basic element is humans. Considering the fact that the environment and even humans constantly change and that organisations are also influenced by those changes, it may be stated that the nature of organisations is changeable and dynamic. It is very difficult to understand this changeable and dynamic nature of organisations. Thus, various theories and approaches have been developed so far in order to understand organisations. One of those approaches is to clarify the nature of organisations through metaphors.

A metaphor is the reflection of social reality figuratively and description of activities or phenomena through similes (Balci, 2003). Hence, a metaphor tries to explain the unknown with the known (Danışman, 2015). Metaphors enable one to look at organisations from different perspectives and thus to uncover differing qualities of organisations (Itkin & Nagy, 2014). In this framework, several metaphors such as machine, organism, brain, culture, policy, jail of spirits, flow and transformation and instruments of domination have been created so as to describe organisations (Morgan, 1998). This study, on the other hand, considers the metaphor of organism likening organisations to a living body, and it briefly examines the theories and approaches of management which are included in the metaphor.

## 2. Organism Metaphor

Classical theory of organisation adopting bureaucratic configuration and scientific management approach in organisations uses the metaphor of machine (Itkin & Nagy, 2014). Yet, the metaphor of machine considers an organisation as a closed system and ignores human factor. At this point, theoreticians of organisation turned to another metaphor, "organism metaphor" (Morgan, 1998). Organism metaphor holds that an organisation is a living organism rather than a lifeless machine. Organisations are born, grow older, fall ill, and even die just like a living creature. Organisations have to adapt to the environment so that they can survive. In other words, organism metaphor considers an organisation as an open system in contrast to machine metaphor considering an organisation as a closed system. The environment in which an organisation lives, adaptation to the environment and flexibility are extremely important for an organisation which is an open system (Itkin & Nagy, 2014).

Organizations just like organisms are in constant interaction with their environment and they try to respond and adapt to any type of environmental change (Balci, 2003; Scot, 2014). Thus, according to organism metaphor, the basic source of change in organisations is the obligation to respond to environmental changes; and not internal

factors. On the other hand, organisations should to be aware of employees' needs in order for them to change and they should take those needs into consideration in this process of change. Organisational structure is dependent on the environment; in addition to that, organisations health and happiness beside individuals' health and happiness is important (Paul, 2015). According to organism metaphor, organisational behaviour is the outcome of environmental powers (for instance, rules, protocols, system, structure, leadership, change, globalisation and competition) and of personal-psychological powers (such as purposes, needs, desires) (Scot, 2014).

In brief, on considering an organisation as an organism, such issues as an organisation's adaptation to the environment, its structure, function, health, balance, differentiation, interpersonal and inter group relations individual needs, organisational development and motivation come into prominence (Bayram, 2010). In this context, this study which considers an organisation as an organism includes neo-classical management theory, contingency theory and population ecology and organisational ecology theory.

### *2.1 Neoclassical (Behavioural) Management Theory*

The fact that classical management theory emphasises formal organisation, that it ignores the element of human and that it distinguishes between human and work and that it pushes humanistic values aside has been criticised (Bursahoglu, 2012). Therefore, neoclassical management theory was developed as a result of various studies such as the one performed by Hawthorne. Neoclassical theory is in fact complementary to classical theory because neoclassical theory is concerned with issues such as productivity and best organisational structure which with classical theory is concerned; but it includes the element of human in the process. It deals with such matters as people's individual and group behaviours, the reasons for their behaviours and orientating the behaviours, and the problems encountered in human relations. Many writers such and researchers such as Elton Mayo, Fritz Roethlisberger, Douglas McGregor, Abraham Maslow, Chester Bernard and Chris Argyris have contributed to the development of neoclassical management theory (Koçel, 2014). This study includes only theories and studies of some outstanding writers due to its restrictions.

#### *2.1.1 Hawthorne Studies*

Hawthorne studies, which were started in 1924 by Elton Mayo et al so as to analyse the relations between physical work conditions and productivity, are composed of six distinct studies (Balci, 2010; Cole, 1980). First four studies analyse the effects of increased lighting, physical exhaustion, encouraging wage and breaks respectively on productivity. These four studies obtained results different from the expected. Accordingly, increase in lighting, for instance, led to increase in productivity, but the same result was also obtained with a decrease in lighting. Despite the application of encouraging wage, no increase was obtained in productivity. Setting out from this point, the fifth study investigated the causes of surprising results. Accordingly, it was found that the increase in productivity despite unfavourable physical conditions stemmed from the fact that employees considered themselves important since they were included in the study while it was found that no increase in cases where encouraging wage was offered stemmed from group pressure. Those results caused Hawthorne et al to perform the sixth study (Balci, 2010; Robbins & Judge, 2012). The major results and inferences obtained in those studies which were completed in six years can be summarised as in the following (Cole, 1998; Hodget, 1997; Lunenberg & Ornstein, 2013):

- Humanistic-social factors such as morale and belongingness, and interpersonal skills such as motivation, leadership, and participatory decision making and effective communication result in productivity.
- For employees, belonging in a group and having a status are more important than materialistic encouragement and physical working conditions.
- The effects of informal groups on employees' behaviours are very large.
- Employees should not be isolated from the workplace environment and they should be considered as group members.
- Administrators and supervisors should be aware of social needs such as belonging in a group, and cooperation should be made with employees by considering these needs.
- Because employees taking part in Hawthorne studies were aware of the fact that research was being done with them and because they encountered an attitude which they had never experienced before, they displayed an attitude different from the usual. This situation was referred to as "Hawthorne effect" in the literature.

It may be said that what is stated above suggests that Hawthorne studies, social relations and informal groups are very influential in employees' behaviours. Hence, those studies are regarded as the fundamental point of departure for neoclassical management theory (Hodget, 1997).

#### *2.1.2 Theory of Needs Hierarchy*

In clinical research into motivation, Maslow (1943) points out that there are five basic needs driving human behaviours. Those needs are interrelated and are organised within the hierarchy of dominance. The hierarchy mentioned are ranked as in the following (Maslow, 1943):

- Physiological needs. They are the needs such as eating, drinking, sexuality and sleep.
- Safety needs. They are the needs such as self-protection, feeling safe and avoiding fear, anxiety and chaos.
- Affection needs. They are the needs such as loving, being loved and belongingness.
- Respectability needs. They are the needs such as power, achievement, dignity, being recognised, attracting attention, being considered important and being appreciated.
- Needs to self-actualise. They are the needs such as individuals completing themselves and putting all their potential into action.

The most dominant need influences the consciousness and organism uses all its potential to meet this need. An upper order need becomes dominant in individuals with the satisfaction of a lower order need, and leads individuals' behaviours. On meeting physiological needs, for instance, safety needs become dominant (Maslow, 1943). Maslow's hierarchy of needs is one of the theories most commonly used in motivating employees in organisations (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013). Thus, organisations (Aşan, 2007; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013; Paşahmetoğlu & Yeloğlu, 2013);

- Should pay enough to meet physiological needs and provide places appropriate for recreation and nutrition in addition to appropriate working conditions.
- Should create safe workplace environments, make plans for job security, assurance and retirement, and impose fair rules and applications.
- Should form harmonious working groups to meet social needs, organise social activities such as sport events, parties and picnics, and employee centred supervision should be performed.
- Should provide rewarding such as promotion and title, give responsibility and appreciate the work performed.
- Should provide creative employment opportunities and encourage skills specific to employees

In the light of what has been stated above, this can be said: Organisations should at least meet their employees' physiological and safety needs in order to obtain efficiency. Thus, it can be said that these two needs have almost completely disappeared in developed countries such as Germany and England (Paşahmetoğlu & Yeloğlu, 2013).

### 2.1.3 Douglas and McGregor's X and Y Theories

McGregor, who was largely influenced by Hawthorn's studies, put forward perspective of human held by classical and neoclassical management conception through X and Y theories (Eren, 2009; Tabak & Sıgır, 2013). The basic assumptions of X and Y theories are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Basic assumptions of X and Y theories

Assumptions of X Theory	Assumptions of Y Theory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humans do not like working, they are lazy and they try to escape from work. For this reason, organisations should take precautions, should consider discipline important and should frighten employees with punishment.</li> <li>• Humans are not ambitious, they avoid responsibility and they want to be managed.</li> <li>• Humans are selfish. They consider their own objectives above organisational objectives and are indifferent to organisational demands. Therefore, strict supervision is essential.</li> <li>• Humans do not like innovations and changes and are resistant to them.</li> <li>• Humans have low ability for creativity. Therefore, the authority to make organisational decisions and to solve problems should not be left to lower levels of the organisation.</li> <li>• Humans are not intelligent, and they can be easily deceived.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working is as natural as playing a game or having a rest for humans. Humans see working as a source of achievement and satisfaction, and they do not hate working.</li> <li>• Strict management and punishment cannot be the only way to lead employees to organisational objectives. If humans have commitment to their organisation and like their job and colleagues, they try to serve to their organisation by managing and supervising the self.</li> <li>• Rewards are extremely important in attaining organisational goals. Employees should be rewarded in attaining the goals.</li> <li>• Employees already have such characteristics as ambition, taking on responsibility, desire to improve and acting according to organisational goals. Administration should provide the conditions to reveal those properties.</li> <li>• Employees largely have the craftsmanship and creativity to solve organisational problems.</li> </ul>

Source. Başaran, 2004; Eren, 2009

As is clear from Table 1, while X theory describes employees as lazy, irresponsible, selfish, not creative and passive individuals who are closed to innovations; Y theory argues that employees are not lazy, that they like

working, and that they are creative, responsible and self-controlled individuals. Besides, it can also be said that the X theory is too autocratic but the Y theory is too democratic and thus they represent two extreme conceptions of management. According to Tabak and Sıgır (2013), managers' behaviours are shaped largely by those assumptions. Thus, managers adopting the assumptions of the X theory apply autocratic management in which strict control, detailed job descriptions, devolution of little authority and punishment and fear are dominant (Tabak & Sıgır, 2013). On the other hand, managers adopting the assumptions of the Y theory try to combine organisational goals with individual goals, and they have management conception in which intragroup relations and respect for humans are prominent and which is open, flexible and participatory (Robbins and Judge, 2012; Smith et al., 1982).

#### 2.1.4 Double Factor (Hygiene-Motivation) Theory

Herzberg asked participants in research conducted in the USA in 1966 with 200 accountants and engineers to tell when they last felt very good and bad at their job (Guha, 2010). Herzberg determined "hygiene factors" and "motivating factors" for employees in accordance with the responses they had given (Koçel, 2014). Hygiene factors are the factors causing employees to feel dissatisfied. Motivating factors, on the other hand, are the factors encouraging and satisfying employees (Eren, 2009). The major hygiene and motivating factors are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Hygiene and motivating factors

Hygiene Factors	Motivating Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Organisational policy</li> <li>•Supervision</li> <li>•Working conditions</li> <li>•Interpersonal relations</li> <li>•Wages</li> <li>•Job security</li> <li>•Personal life</li> <li>•Status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Achievement</li> <li>•Being recognised</li> <li>•Work itself</li> <li>•Responsibility</li> <li>•Improvement</li> <li>•Development</li> </ul>

Source. Herzberg, Mousner and Snyderman, 1959; cited by. Pardee, 1990.

As is clear from Table 2, hygiene factors include external and physical factors such as wages, supervision and working conditions while motivating factors contain such internal and psychological factors as achievement, being recognized and responsibility (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013). As mentioned before, the absence of hygiene factors results in dissatisfaction in employees; however, their availability does not cause considerable job satisfaction, but it results in neutrality. To exemplify, failure in the operation of photocopier most probably causes teachers to feel dissatisfied. Yet, its operation may not result in considerable satisfaction. A similar situation is also true for motivating factors. The availability of those factors increases job satisfaction, but the absence of them does not cause considerable dissatisfaction (Eren, 2009; Hoy & Miskel, 2012).

Double factor theory is very important for administrators to become aware of factors causing job dissatisfaction and satisfaction and to take the necessary steps. For instance, when an administrator does not pay appropriate wages and fail to implement suitable policies that is to say, when he/she does not take hygiene factors into consideration, he/she should know that he/she will lose his/her employees (Smith et al., 1982). Yet, it should be remembered that there are not always clear cut distinctions between hygiene factors and motivating factors. To put it in other terms, wage can be a hygiene factor for some employees whereas it can be a motivating factor for some other employees (Hoy & Miskel, 2012).

Double factor theory is one of the theories most commonly known in the field of organization. Thus, the fact that Herzberg suggested that achievement and challenging work in particular motivated employees caused enrichment activities to come into prominence in organizations (Smith et al., 1982). It can also be stated that there is a tie between double factor theory and needs hierarchy theory as in the following: hygiene factors represent lower order needs (such as physiological and safety needs) while motivating factors represent upper order needs (such as affection, respectability and self-actualization needs) (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2013).

#### 2.1.5 Maturation Theory

According to Chris Argyris, individuals change from immature to mature as they develop. In the process of maturation there are seven properties changing: the changes are from passivity to activity, from dependence to independence, from displaying limited behaviour to displaying varied behaviour, from superficial interest to deep interest, from short term perspective to long term perspective, from being subordinate to being superordinate, from being devoid of self-awareness to having self-awareness (Smith et al., 1982).

According to maturation theory, it is not always possible to reconcile a mature person's needs and demands with classical conception of organisation because classical conception of organisation considers employees as passive, dependent and subordinate and thus hinders them from becoming mature. Employees cannot demonstrate their potential fully due to such mechanisms as specialisation in the job, chain of command and constant and close supervision and consequently they cannot actualise themselves. This in turn leads to such negative results as stress, anger, conflicts, and formation of groups showing resistance to administration (Başaran, 2008; Koçel, 2014; Smith et al., 1982).

According to maturation theory, increase in organisation employees' fields of responsibility contributes to their maturation. Mature employees perform activities useful to both themselves and their organisation. Hence, form of management adopted by an organisation is influential in encouraging or hindering maturation. Depending on the form of management implemented, employees display active or passive behaviours (Dalay, 2013). Based on all these, it can be said that maturation is extremely important for employees not to suffer from such negative things as stress, anger and conflicts and to become active individuals beneficial to their organisation. In this context, it would be useful for administrators wishing to contribute to the maturation of employees to adopt the Y theory arguing for open, flexible and participatory conception of management. Koçel (2014) also recommends that administrators should adopt the Y theory, that accordingly they should assign more responsibility to their subordinates and that they should prepare environments giving them development opportunities.

## 2.2 System Approach

System approach began to influence the field of management beginning with World War two, and it introduced openness and flexibility into strict and closed conception of management of traditional management theories, and it laid the foundation for contingency theory (Efil, 2010).

A system can be defined as a whole (Bursalioglu, 2012; Hatch, 1997) which is composed of parts coming together to attain a certain goal or certain goals (Balci, 2010) and interacting with each other. Although there are several classifications such as mechanical-biological-social or deterministic-probabilistic in relation to systems, it may be stated that the classification of open-closed is the one which is used the most frequently (Hodge, Anthony & Gales, 2003). Systems exchanging information, energy or substances with their environment are called "open systems" whereas the systems having no such relations with their environment are called "closed systems" (Koçel, 2014).

The emergence of the concept of system dates back to the 1920s, and it is based on "general system theory" suggested by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, a biologist (Koçel, 2014). General system theory aims to set up cooperation between many branches of science such as biology, mathematics and economy and thus to find and develop general principles applicable to any system. In this way, it emphasises the need to analyse activities by considering their interactions with other activities and with the environment instead of isolating the activities (or systems) from environmental conditions and analysing them from one perspective. This "holistic" or "generalistic" conception constitutes the philosophy of the mentioned theory and it distinguishes the system approach from other approaches (Dicle & Dicle, 1969). Accordingly, approaching organisations as a system necessitates analysing the activity of management and the relations of the units of management with each other and the quality of those relations and investigating the effects of developments in a certain unit on other units that is to say analysing the management activities in association with other activities and with environmental conditions (Koçel, 2014).

Several writers such as Optner, Homans, Kotter, Parsons, Katz and Khan applied system approach to management and to organisations. The approaches adopted by Parsons, Katz and Khan come into prominence. Parsons stresses that organisations are social systems in "social system theory" and the author lays emphasis on the importance of human relations. The author highlights the concepts of adaptation, goal attainment, integration and latent pattern maintenance (Balci, 2002; Dicle & Dicle, 1969). Katz and Khan, on the other hand, state in their "open system theory" that organisations are complex open systems interacting with sub-systems constituting them and with their environment. The authors emphasise that open systems can survive with exchange of energy with their environment and they stress concepts such as feedback, negative entropy, dynamic balance and differentiation (Mele, Pels & Polese 2010; Yağmurlu, 2014).

System approach has considerably influenced the field of management with holism and synergy and with the concepts of equal consequentialness and system adaptation. That is to say, classical and neoclassical theories of management failed to see organisations as a whole and emphasised some of the sub-systems while ignoring some of them. However, system approach developed the thought that all sub-systems of an organisation or parts of it influence each other and thus create synergy. The conception of equal consequentialness introduced

managers to the view that the only way to find solutions was not to display strict and authoritarian attitudes, and thus brought flexibility to management in problem solving and decision making. System approach suggests that it is necessary to make modifications in an organisation to adapt to the environment. In this way, it encourages managers to carry on radical changes when necessary (Koçel, 2014; Özkalp, 2004a). The perspective that the approach bringing openness and flexibility to management has in relation to organisations can thus be summarised as in the following (Ertekin, 1985; Özkalp, 2004a):

- An organisation is an open system.
- An organisation is composed of a combination of sub-systems which can be considered as separate systems which are composed of the same elements. However, in order to be able to talk of an organisation's integrity, a synergic environment created by harmonious relations between sub-systems should exist.
- As a natural result of these sub-systems constituting an organisation and of the constant and dynamic relations existing between elements, organisations have internal conflicts and tensions.
- There are also constant and dynamic relations between an organisation and its environment. An organisation's environment is exposed to continuous changes. In order to be able to survive, in the environment, to be able to grow bigger and sustain its identity; an organisation
  - Should change and adapt itself to its environment, it should conduct appropriate changes in the form of management, information flow and in such factors.
  - Should be informed of the expectations and conditions of the environment.
  - Should have effective feedback and control mechanisms so that it can be protected from entropic factors.
- Organisations take precautions in order not to experience destructive surprise and chaos while undergoing changes and they can keep their existence and identity only in this way.
- Organisations are purpose-goal-oriented beings. Each organisation has its own specific goals. Yet, such goals as surviving, growing bigger, developing and adjusting to changes to do these are included – or should be included in every organisation's goals.

Based on the above mentioned characteristics, it can be said that organisations are open systems trying to attain several goals such as mainly surviving, developing and preserving their identity. It can also be stated that organisations are in continual interaction with their environment so as to attain their goals and that they can cope with problems through strong mechanisms of adaptation and feedback even though they occasionally encounter such problems as conflicts and tension.

### 2.3 Contingency Theory

System approach, which is criticised due to failure despite its efforts to combine management theories and due to containing general and abstract concepts, began to lose its dominance in the field of management in the 1970s and contingency theory began to replace it (Can, 2007; Eren, 2009). According to contingency theory arguing that there are no universal management principles applicable on any conditions, each organisation has internal properties and environmental circumstances specific to it; and therefore, organisational structure and conception of management change from organisation to organisation (İpek, 2013). That is to say, contingency theory stresses the need to take into consideration an organisation's own conditions, its environmental conditions, the properties of technology used and the socio-cultural properties of its employees in the process of management (Eren, 2009). Research should be done to determine the form of management suitable to those properties and conditions (Başaran, 2004).

Many researchers have contributed to the development of contingency theory. In this context, studies performed by Burns and Stalker, Wood, and Lawrence and Lorch are the pioneers (Cole, 1988). Burns and Stalker identified the differences between mechanical and organic approaches of organisation, and suggested that organisations should have a conception of management which is flexible and open to innovations so that they can adapt to changing environmental conditions (Nayır, 2008). Woodward, on the other hand, analysed the correlations between organisation structure and technology in late 1950s, and demonstrated that the principles of classical management theory were not the right principles for using all the time and that different technologies required different ways of organising. For instance, while bureaucratic organisation is appropriate for organisations using serial production technology, the type of organisation based on human relations is more appropriate for organisations making small scale production (Eren, 2009; Morgan, 2008). Lawrence and Lorch investigated how organisations should be configured on the basis of "differentiation and integration" concepts on changeable and uncertain conditions. Differentiation represents the formal structural differences between the departments of an organisation and the differences in cognitive and emotional tendencies of department workers. Integration,

however, expresses the coordination between departments. According to research conducted in this respect, organisations existing in dynamic, changeable and uncertain environments should have both integration and differentiation. Organisations existing in static and certain environments, however, do not need to have much differentiation (Koçel, 2014). According to contingency theory, which was shaped by research mentioned (Morgan, 2008),

- Organisations are the open systems which are to meet internal needs and adapt to environmental conditions.
- Organisations are organised in different types according to the conditions of tasks or of the environment.
- Different management approaches can be employed in performing different tasks in the same organisation.
- What is essential in management is to have harmony and appropriateness.
- Different types of organisations are needed in different environments.

Therefore, in the light of what has been said so far, it is necessary to implement flexible management considering both environmental conditions and internal needs in an organisation according to contingency theory. As is evident, contingency theory does not exclude other theories of management, and it is stated in this theory that classical or neoclassical approaches can be used according to organisations, departments, environmental conditions and time.

Contingency theory has made significant contributions in terms of managers' ability to describe or diagnose the current situation in the best way. Managers adopting this theory will be able to make the best decisions and generate solutions by developing different strategies and structures. Another important aspect of the theory is that it reminds managers the fact that the environment and organisations can constantly change (Özkalp, 2004b).

#### *2. 4 Population Ecology Theory and Organisational Ecology Theory*

According to theoreticians of population ecology, system and contingency theories emphasise the need for organisations' adaptation to the environment but they attribute too much strength and flexibility to organisations but too little strength and flexibility to the environment while doing this. According to those theoreticians, the existence and variation of organisations should be analysed from Darwinist perspective and at population level (Morgan, 1998). That is to say, the fact that all living creatures in nature face natural selection and consequently some of them are eliminated and the remaining part survives is also true for organisations. Therefore, what controls organisational population is the environment (Erenel, 2015; [www.baskent.edu.tr](http://www.baskent.edu.tr)). In other words, whereas the environment gives suitable organisations the opportunity to survive according to their sources and characteristics, it eliminates others (Koçel, 2014).

Population ecology theory, as its naming suggests, analyses the relations of organisational population or rather a group of organisations with the environment instead of the relations of one organisation with the environment. This approach gives the theory a sociological quality (Erdil, Kalkan & Alparslan, 2010). According to the theory, the quality, number and distribution of the population of an organisation at a given time depend on the available sources and the factor of competition. Organisations surviving after struggling with scarce resources are strong organisations. Organisations within a certain population have similar strengths and weaknesses; even though some of them are stronger than others, they give similar responses to changes in the long term with their population (Morgan, 1998).

"Inertia" occupies a significant place in population ecology theory. The concept of inertia is defined as an organisation's failure to react to environmental changes for several reasons, and having almost inaction (Koçel, 2014; Soysal, 2010). Factors making organisations inert can be internal and external. Internal causes include costly changes, requirement for new investments, failure to have sufficient information from external environment, disturbance of balance caused by changes, and an organisation's refusal to give up its targets, rules and principles. External causes, on the other hand, can be listed as legal and financial restrictions, failure to access to timely and accurate information and endangerment of an organisation's legitimacy within itself and among other organisations as a result of its desire and decision to change (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). Population ecology theory means that an organisation tends to be in inertia instead of meeting the needs of a changeable and dynamic environment. If organisations adapted to continuously changing environment, they would spend their energy only for adaptation and they would not have any energy left. Yet, organisations react to environmental threats and opportunities slowly (Leblebici, 2005). Besides, it can also be stated that inclination to have inertia increases in large and established organisations (Nayır, 2008).

Population ecology theory is criticised in that it is extremely reductionist, that it does not take into account organisations' own strategies and activities and that it ignores the fact that each organisation's authority and

resources are specific to it (Hijalager, 2000). Those criticisms led to the emergence of organisational ecology theory which was a more optimistic theory. Population ecology theory considers organisations and the environment as separate phenomena and it assumes that they are in constant competition and tension. According to organisational ecology theory, however, it is not right to distinguish between an organisation and the environment in this way because evolution does not occur in consequence of selection of the organisations to survive through adaptation to environmental changes. Organisations have relations with their environment and indeed they undergo evolution altogether. Organisational environments are largely composed of other organisations. Therefore, organisations have cooperation as well as competition in the adaptation process. Profession associations or industrial associations formed by organisations operating in the same sector to protect their joint interests are examples for cooperation between organisations (Morgan, 1998). Briefly, according to organisational ecology theory, evolution is holistic and there is cooperation in addition to competition between organisations in this process.

### 2. 5 Positive and Negative Aspects of Organism Metaphor

Organism metaphor tries to describe organisations by likening them to living organisms, and thus helps individuals to understand organisations more easily. Yet, it has adequacy as well as inadequacy in describing organisations. Table 3 shows the positive and negative sides of organism metaphor.

Based on Table 3, the following can be said about organism metaphor: considering organisations as open systems, prioritising organisation-environment and organisation-organisation relations, bringing openness and flexibility to management, emphasising meeting individual and organisational needs and considering dynamic configuration necessary for renewal are the major positive aspects of organism metaphor. On the other hand, ignoring organisations' and organisation employees' activities, neglecting the social aspect of organisations where norms, ideas, beliefs and visions are prioritised, not taking organisational conflicts and division into account are the major negative sides of organism metaphor.

Table 3. Positive and negative aspects of organism metaphor

Positive aspects	Negative aspects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlike traditional management theories, it considers organisations as open systems interacting with the environment not closed systems. Consequently, it helps to comprehend the relations between organisations and the environment.</li> <li>• It brings openness and flexibility to organisation management.</li> <li>• It emphasises the importance of the necessity that needs should be satisfied in organisation management. In this context, human and organisational needs should be satisfied in a balanced way and continuously because the ultimate goal of an organisation is to survive, and this is possible by meeting the needs.</li> <li>• It provides managers with different options of organisation in determining different types of organisation. Managers can prefer the type of matrix, team based or organic configuration consistent with environmental conditions. Organising is extremely important for an organisation to be effective.</li> <li>• It stresses the importance of renewal process for organisations. Organisations having dynamic and flexible configuration are more inclined to changes and renewal than mechanical organisations.</li> <li>• It helps to establish a situational approach in which adaptation to the environment is prioritised.</li> <li>• It demonstrates the importance of relations between organisations with its conception of organisational ecology. Organisations should improve relations between organisations in order to be able to survive on complicated environmental conditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It considers organisations and their environment as too concrete structures. For instance, it attaches importance to such physical properties as the form of organisations and their structure, but it does not allocate enough space for people's creative activities. Yet, organisations are social phenomena which are largely the outcome of norms, ideas, beliefs and visions.</li> <li>• It approaches organisations as a phenomenon adjusting to the environment or selected by the environment; and in a sense it ignores organisation employees' activities.</li> <li>• It claims that functional unity is dominant in organisations that is to say, sub-systems serve to organisational goals by working in harmony. Yet, conflicts of interest and segmentation often occur between sub-systems in organisations.</li> </ul>

Source. Morgan, 1998.

### 3. The Effects of Organism Metaphor on Educational Organisations

Organism metaphor considers organisations as being in constant interaction with their environment and as open systems. In this context, it is inevitable for educational organisations which receive their input from society and give their output to society to have interaction with their environment. Besides, as Bursalioglu (2012) states, education performs such social, political and economic functions as changing individuals into conscious citizens



and making them good consumers and producers. In accordance with this, educational systems should be shaped and changed by the needs of social, political and economic environment. Hence, modifications and reforms occasionally made to curricula in educational systems are made in order to adapt to the environment and in order not to lose strength (Sarpkaya, 2013). Unless educational systems take environmental needs into consideration and use adaptation mechanisms, they gradually become closed systems and they lose all their strength in the end.

Educational organisations are the open systems receiving such input as students, teachers and technology from their environment and processing them and giving such output as knowledge, educated students, achievement and job satisfaction to their environment. Yet, schools, like other organisations, are not flawless, and they can also yield undesired or inadequate output (Başaran, 2009). Schools can activate their feedback mechanism and become informed of whether or not graduates attend further education, get a job, or of what type of qualified workforce is needed by society and of the quality of their service and programmes (Yalçınkaya, 2002).

On discussing the effects of organism metaphor on educational organisations on the basis of behavioural or neoclassical theory, the following can be said: Neoclassical theory was reflected into educational organisations as democratic management conception. In consequence, school administrators' burden to evaluate school efficiency was relieved and curriculum content was changed. Curricula focused on children's adaptation to life. Educational managers were expected to act as democratic leaders. Neoclassical theory also affected supervision process and the roles and tasks of supervisors. Supervisors internalised the fact that teachers also had feelings and excitement and that supervision was not only a technique but that it was also a social process. Therefore, it was considered necessary for supervisors to acquire skills in such issues as understanding personality and behaviours and innovation, change and communication (Bursalıoğlu, 2012).

As pointed out earlier, neoclassical theory exhibited that informal groups were very influential in individuals' behaviours. It is a commonly known fact that teachers constitute informal groups in schools and that they act by sticking to group norms. As Bursalıoğlu (2012) also points out, educational managers should take informal groups into consideration and cooperate with them. Such an approach contributes to attaining school goals. Another point neoclassical theory highlights is that individuals' needs should be met for effectiveness and efficiency because motivating individuals and making them act according to organisational goals is closely related with meeting needs. For this reason, sensitive and effective educational managers should not see teachers as cogwheels and should consider their needs. Otherwise, it is inevitable for teachers to suffer from such negative feelings as depression and burnout. However, school administrators mostly do not go out of their office and thus they do not understand teachers' needs and cannot communicate effectively with teachers (Kocabaş & Köse, 2005).

Another point organism metaphor highlights is "adaptation". While system theoreticians argue that organisations can survive by adapting to the environment, population ecology theoreticians have a different conception of adaptation. Accordingly they claim that organisations act with competition and that the stronger ones are selected by the environment. Thus, it is clear that applying population ecology theoreticians' reasoning of "competition and the stronger one survives" to educational organisations will not yield positive results. The reason for this is that such an approach would turn educational organisations into businesses and education into a commodity which is bought and sold. However, it can unfortunately be said that Darwinist reasoning influences the area of education along with other areas in the form of global capitalism. As Ünal (2014) also states, privatisation, increasing the number of private schools and universities, reducing state support to educational organisations and focusing on market demands are among the above mentioned influences. Those influences are reflected into the poor people in negative ways. Thus, inequality increases, access to education and the quality of education accessed decrease. Failure at school, and the rates of drop out increase. In short, Darwinist and capitalist reasoning reduces education's functions such as socialising individuals and transferring virtues and values to individuals, and thus turning education into an instrument of raising producers and consumers required by markets (Çınar, 2009). In this context, educational organisations change into places where inequality increases.

As is clear, competition based views held by population ecology theory do not affect the field of education in positive ways. In this respect, the view that cooperation should be considered important in order for organisations to survive held by theoreticians of organisational ecology is more acceptable. Support and cooperation between educational organisations of every stage from primary education to secondary and higher education will result in more positive effects than seeing each other as opponents and having competition. Hence, Sahlberg (2015), who stresses the fact that cooperation lies on the basis of Finland's system of education which is regarded as a model today, says "the rules of competitive market economy do not work in education. There is no competition but cooperation between schools in Finland...They achieve success with team spirit." Therefore, increasing cooperation between educational organisations is an issue which should be emphasised and in which

steps should be taken. In this context, forming consortiums between universities located in the same region, conducting joint projects and postgraduate studies by those universities for instance can raise the quality of knowledge produced and of scientists raised. Conducting projects jointly with other schools or universities would also contribute to the solution of educational-instructional problems. To sum up, on considering nationwide education as a system and educational organisations as the sub-systems of the system, cooperative work of educational organisations can create synergy and help the development of the educational system.

#### 4. Conclusion

Organism metaphor regards organisations as open systems which are in constant interaction with their environment and which have to adapt to their environment to survive. According to organism metaphor, the sub-systems of an organisation interact with each other, and an organisation is a whole which is more than the sum of its sub-systems. Human element is as important as structure for an organisation. Besides, individuals' needs, their motivation, interpersonal relations and informal groups are the elements that should be taken into consideration in management process. Apart from that, organisations have interaction with other organisations in the form of competition or cooperation and thus they make efforts to survive.

Although organism metaphor is criticised in that it ignores organisation employees' activities in the process of adaptation to the environment and that it does not allow space for organisational conflicts and divisions, its contributions to the field of education are undeniable. As a matter of fact, organism metaphor has given openness and flexibility to management. The metaphor is also valuable in that it stresses the importance of interactions between organisations and their environment, of human relations within organisations and of the relations between organisations.

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