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# The effects of teachers' perception of organizational justice and culture on organizational commitment

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It is believed that the concepts of organizational culture, justice and commitment should be evaluated within different cultural environments and in different countries and the effects of the perceived organizational justice and the organizational culture on organizational commitment should be investigated. Therefore, the present study will investigate the effects of teachers' perception of organizational justice and organizational culture on organizational commitment. The study is of the general survey model. Scales of organizational justice, organizational commitment and organizational culture were administered to the teachers in the study. The research population comprises the teachers who work in Konya, Turkey during the 2008 - 2009 academic years. The research sample consists of 445 teachers who were selected from the population according to the random sampling method. According to the results of the study, organizational culture and organizational justice affect teachers' affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment to the organization, respectively. It is believed that, studying other variables that affect organizational commitment in teachers may be useful. In particular, determining other variables that influence teachers' affective commitment to the organization, which means identifying themselves with the organization, and undertaking the necessary work in this regard may increase teachers' job performance. In addition, determining the theories of administration by which school head teachers manage their schools and offering in-service training programmes especially to those who conduct their administrative activities using classical theories of administration.

**Key words:** Organizational justice, organizational culture, organizational commitment, teachers.

## INTRODUCTION

Organizational commitment is one of the basic activities as well as one of the ultimate goals in the efforts of organizations to maintain their existence. The reason for this is that individuals with a high level of organizational commitment are more compatible, satisfied and productive, work with a sense of greater loyalty and responsibility and thus cost less to the organization (Balci, 2003). There are various definitions in the literature regarding organizational commitment. For example, Leong, Furnham and Cooper (1996) defined organizational commitment as the combined power of identification which an individual has with an organization and their commitment to it. Meyer and Allen (1997), on the other hand, defined organizational commitment as behavior that took shape as a result of individuals'

relationship with the organization and caused them to decide to become a permanent member of the organization. Organizational commitment is the degree to which people identify with the organization that employs them. It implies a willingness on the employee's part to put forth a substantial effort on the organization's behalf and his or her intention to stay with the organization for a long time (Wagner and Hollenbeck, 2010, p.111).

It is observed that many studies have been conducted on organizational commitment in recent years (e.g., Meyer and Allen, 1997; Dilek, 2005; Keller, 1997; Hammer and Avgar, 2005). Meyer and Allen (1997) divided organizational commitment into three sub-dimensions, namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment and emphasized

that organizational justice, in particular, is connected with affective commitment.

Grouping the causes of organizational commitment in three dimensions, Meyer and Allen (1997) defined affective, continuance and normative commitment in the following way:

- i. Affective commitment is defined as the affective desire on the part of individuals employed in an organization to continue to work in the organization as a result of identifying themselves with the organization.
- ii. Continuance commitment can be defined as the state where employees continue to stay in the organization with the thought that if they leave the job, they will suffer financially and their job opportunities will be limited.
- iii. Normative commitment can be explained as the situation where employees do not leave the job as a result of a moral obligation of duty.

People compare the treatment they receive in organizations of which they are members with the treatments that other people receive, and make judgments about the level of justice in the organization in accordance with their own perceptions. It is believed that these evaluations play a key role in the way members perform their organizational duties and responsibilities. Therefore, the concept of organizational justice is frequently included in studies concerning organizations and management (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Thompson and Heron, 2005; Özdevecioğlu, 2003; Konovsky, 2000). Organizational justice, in its most general sense, is the way individuals perceive justice regarding practices in their organizations (Bies and Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1990).

When the relevant literature is examined, it is found that the perception of organizational justice comprises the sub-dimensions of 'distributive justice', 'procedural justice' and 'interactive justice', and the perception of overall organizational justice emerges from a combination of these three sub-dimensions (Colquitt, 2001; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001).

Distributive justice is a perception of justice that encompasses the perceptions of the members of the organization regarding fair distribution of resources among the members of the organization. It is based on 'Equity Theory' developed by Adams (1965) and 'a theory of justice' by Rawls (1999). Both of these theories concern distribution of resources. Rawls (1999) believes that every human being should enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms as much as other human beings and that social and economic inequality should be handled so that they will benefit everybody. According to Adams (1965), individuals compare the effort they spent and the result they obtained with the effort others in the same workplace spent and the result they obtained. This situation is important for the organizational justice perception of a person who is a member of an

organization. In this sense, the counterpart of both theories developed by Rawls (1999) and Adams (1965) in the organizational framework can be explained through the concept of distributive justice. Distributive justice in organizations is a concept that explains the distribution of all kinds of acquisitions such as duties, goods, services, opportunities, punishments/rewards, roles, status, wages and promotion among individuals, on the basis of their similarities and differences (Walster et al., 1978; Greenberg, 1990; Foley et al., 2002).

The existence of procedural justice, which is one of the sub-dimensions of organizational justice, can be understood by investigating how justice works in the decision-making processes that affect our relationships with the organizations and each other (Korgaard and Sapienza, 2002). Procedural justice can be defined as the fairness of the decision-making process in the organization. People desire to participate in the decision-making processes in organizations and assume control. The justice perceptions of individuals who are involved in the process in organizations are at a higher level (Thibaut and Walker 1975; Lind and Tyler, 1988; Folger and Konovsky, 1989).

Interactive justice is a concept that concerns perceptions of employees about the treatment they have received during the application of organizational procedures (It is generally concerned with the concepts of courtesy, justice and respect between the source and the receiver during the process of communication) (Bies and Moag, 1986; Eskew, 1993). According to Folger and Bies (1989), indicators of the existence of interactive justice are demonstrating due respect to employees, introducing consistent criteria, giving feedback on time and behaving appropriately and sincerely.

According to the results of a study conducted by Wasti (2001), the perception of organizational justice increases the positive commitment that employees feel towards the organization. Perception of organizational justice appears to be one of the most important reasons for especially affective commitment. According to the results of a study conducted by Folger and Konovsky (1989), individuals with a high-level perception of organizational perception also have a high level of commitment to the organization. It is observed that there are other studies in the relevant literature that support Folger and Konovsky's research findings (Steers, 1977; Chatman, 1989; McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992; Otto, 1993; DeConick and Dean, 1996; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Samad, 2006).

According to Bi man (2007), culture cannot be transferred genetically. Individuals learn and acquire their culture by interacting with the natural and social environment in which they live. Since culture is a concept that can be learned later, the culture of the organizations where individuals live becomes important.

Organizations, like individuals, have identities. As with personal identities, organizational identities are built upon experiences, beliefs, and values. In a school

organization, identity is the product of the shared experiences, beliefs, and values of its staff, students, and community (McKeever and CSLA, 2003, p.28.). The organizational culture includes all the fundamental values and beliefs of an organization and the symbols, ceremonies and mythologies that convey them to the employees (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Çelik, 2000). According to another definition, the organizational culture is the total of a series of assumptions, beliefs and values that have been enforced in an organization in a conscious, unconscious or semi-conscious manner (Schein, 1985; Balci, 2003;). There are different classifications of the organizational culture in the literature. According to the classification made by Harrison (1972) and Handy (1985), in role culture, hierarchy and authority are important in organizations and job descriptions, rules and functions have been delineated in advance. In the success culture, however, implementation of tasks and expertise are more important than rules and the organization has a flexible nature. Besides, it is observed that in some organizations, there is a power culture where power is in the hands of certain people, or a support culture where everybody is considered valuable and concepts such as communication, solidarity, trust and participation in decision-making are emphasized (Bilgin, 2007).

There are various studies that demonstrate the positive correlation between organizational culture and organizational commitment (Posner et al., 1985; Meyer et al., 2002). According to the results of the study conducted by Meyer et al. (2002), the perception of supportive culture particularly increases affective and normative commitment of employees but reduces their desire to leave their jobs.

Some studies indicate that the level of perceived organizational justice has a positive influence on the motivation, attitude and behavior of the employees towards the organization (Austin and Walster, 1974; Greenberg, 1990). In contrast, a negative perception of organizational justice leads to some negative consequences such as aggressiveness (Folger and Konovski, 1989; Özdevecioğlu, 2003). According to the results of the study conducted by Meyer et al. (2002), if the perceptions of organizational justice and organizational culture are positive, then together they have a higher level of influence on the organizational commitment of employees than their influence individually.

It is believed that the concepts of organizational culture, organizational justice and organizational commitment should be evaluated within different cultural environments and in different countries and the effects of the perceived organizational justice and the organizational culture on organizational commitment should be investigated. Therefore, the present study will investigate the effects of teachers' perception of organizational justice and organizational culture on organizational commitment.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Population and sample**

The study is of the general survey model. The research population comprises teachers who worked in Konya, Turkey, during the 2008 - 2009 academic years. The research sample consists of 445 teachers who were selected from the population according to the random sampling method.

The sample group consists of 232 (52.1%) male and 213 (47.9%) female teachers. 30 teachers (6.7%) hold two-year degrees, 380 teachers (85.4%) hold bachelor degrees and 35 teachers (7.9%) hold masters degrees. Moreover, with regard to seniority, 55 teachers (12.4%) have been in the job for 0 - 4 years, 76 teachers (17.1%) for 5 - 9 years, 116 teachers (37.3%) for 10 - 14 years, 59 teachers (13.3%) for 15 - 19 years and 89 teachers (20.00%) for 20 years or more.

### **The organizational commitment scale**

The organizational commitment scale was developed by Meyer and Allen (1997). The scale was adapted for Turkey by Dilek (2005). The Turkish version of the scale comprises 3 sub-dimensions and 16 items. The dimensions of the scale are listed as affective commitment, which contains 7 items (e.g., I feel an affective (emotional) commitment (attachment) towards this organization), continuance commitment, which contains 5 items (e.g., I feel anxious about what will happen if I leave this job without getting another job beforehand) and normative commitment, which contains 4 items (e.g., I will feel guilty if I leave this job now.). The factorial loads of the items of the scale vary between: 0.558 and 0.750 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.902) in the affective commitment sub-dimension; 0.712 and 0.816 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.838) in the continuance commitment sub-dimension; and 0.574 and 0.699 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.814) in the normative commitment sub-dimension.

### **The organizational culture scale**

The organizational culture scale was developed by Dipek (1999). The scale comprises four sub-dimensions and 36 items. The sub-dimensions of the scale have been determined as power culture, with 7 items (e.g., everybody avoids dissenting with the management.), role culture, with 9 items (e.g., formal relations are prominent), success culture, with 10 items (e.g., success is supported and encouraged), support culture with 10 items (e.g., co-operation is preferred to competition). The factorial loads of the items of the scale are as follows: 0.32 - 0.0.55 in the power culture subculture; 0.36 - 0.76 in the role culture subculture; 0.47 - 0.78 in the success subculture; and 0.45 - 0.82 in the support culture sub-dimension. The Cronbach's alpha values of the sub-dimensions of the scale are 0.60, 0.69, 0.78 and 0.90 respectively according to the dimensions.

### **The organizational justice scale**

The teachers' perceptions of justice regarding their schools were measured by the 'organizational justice scale' developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993). The scale was adapted for Turkey by Polat (2007).

Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the whole of the scale was determined to be 0.96. The reliability coefficients for the sub-dimensions of organizational justice were calculated as 0.89 for distributive justice, 0.95 for procedural justice and 0.90 for interactive justice.

**Table 1.** Results of the regression analysis for factors that predict teachers' affective commitment.

Variables	B	Std. error	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	-0.318	1.888	-	-0.169	0.866
Distributive justice	0.003	0.076	0.003	0.046	0.963
Procedural justice	0.315	0.071	0.405	4.411	0.000
Interactive justice	0.123	0.146	0.074	0.843	0.400
Power	0.161	0.049	0.139	3.303	0.001
Role	0.047	0.044	0.047	1.061	0.289
Success	0.173	0.046	0.200	3.746	0.000
Support	0.047	0.036	0.066	1.292	0.197

Note.  $R = 0.656$ ,  $R^2 = 0.430$ ,  $F = (7.434) = 46.787$ ,  $p = 0.000$ .

**Table 2.** Results of the regression analysis for factors that predict teachers' continuance commitment.

Variables	B	Std. error	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	7.125	1.904	-	3.742	0.000
Distributive justice	0.024	0.077	0.021	0.319	0.750
Procedural justice	0.138	0.072	0.199	1.918	0.056
Interactive justice	0.194	0.148	0.130	1.310	0.191
Power	0.467	0.049	0.454	9.505	0.000
Role	-0.202	0.045	-0.229	-4.539	0.000
Success	0.075	0.047	0.097	1.591	0.112
Support	-0.048	0.037	-0.076	-1.286	0.199

Note.  $R = .518$ ,  $R^2 = 0.268$ ,  $F = (7.431) = 22.534$ ,  $p = 0.000$ .

The items were classified three-dimensionally in the factorial analysis conducted after the administration of the scale as in the original. Since the factorial load of each item was above 0.45, all the items were included in the evaluation. As a result of the factorial analysis, it was determined that 6 items of the three-factor scale measured distributive justice, 9 measured procedural justice and 4 measured interactive justice.

#### Data analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted on the data that was collected to determine the effects of teachers' perceived organizational culture and organizational justice on their organizational commitment using SPSS 14.0 software.

#### FINDINGS

It is observed in Table 1 that, all of the 7 predictive variables included in the study correlated significantly with the teachers' affective commitment scores ( $R = 0.656$ ,  $R^2 = 0.430$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Moreover, it is observed that the 7 variables together account for 43% of the total variance in affective commitment.

When standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is taken into consideration, the significance order of the predictive variables was determined as: procedural justice; success;

power; interactive justice; support; role and distributive justice. According to the results of the t test regarding the significance of the regression coefficients, it is observed that procedural justice, power and success variables are significant predictors of affective commitment. It was concluded that the other variables of the study did not have a significant effect on teachers' affective commitment.

It is observed in Table 2 that, the predictive variables together correlate significantly with teachers' continuance commitment scores ( $R = 0.518$ ,  $R^2 = 0.268$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). It is also observed that the predictive variables together account for 22.534% of the total variance in continuance commitment.

When standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is taken into consideration, the significance order of the predictive variables on continuance commitment was determined as: power; role; procedural justice; interactive justice; success; support and distributive justice. According to the results of the t test regarding the significance of the regression coefficients, it is observed that the power and role culture variables are significant predictors of continuance commitment. It was concluded that the other variables of the study did not have a significant effect on teachers' continuance commitment to their occupation.

From Table 3, it is observed that, there is a significant

**Table 3.** Results of the regression analysis for factors that predict teachers' normative commitment.

Variables	B	Std. error	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	.845	1.491	-	0.567	0.571
Distributive justice	0.010	0.060	0.011	0.160	0.873
Procedural justice	0.102	0.056	0.196	1.813	0.070
Interactive justice	0.017	0.115	0.015	0.144	0.885
Power	0.274	0.038	0.354	7.148	0.000
Role	-0.029	0.035	-0.043	-0.829	0.407
Success	0.025	0.037	0.044	0.697	0.486
Support	0.081	0.028	0.171	2.837	0.005

Note.  $R = 0.456$ ,  $R^2 = 0.208$ ,  $F = (7.435) = 16.305$ ,  $p = 0.000$ .

correlation between predictive variables and teachers' normative commitment scores ( $R = 0.456$ ,  $R^2 = 0.208$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Predictive variables account for 16.305% of the total variance in continuance commitment.

According to standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), the significance order of the predictive variables on normative commitment was determined as; power; procedural justice; support; success; role; interactive justice and distributive justice. The results of the t test regarding the significance of the regression coefficients indicate that the power and support variables are significant predictors of normative commitment. It was concluded that the other variables of the study did not have a significant effect on teachers' normative commitment to their occupation.

## DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

According to the results of the study, organizational culture and organizational justice affect teachers' affective commitment (43%), continuance commitment (22.534%) and normative commitment (16.305%) to the organization respectively. According to some research results organizational justice is one of the most important causes of affective commitment (Wasti, 2001; Klendauer and Deller, 2009; Su et al., 2009). This result supports the findings of our study. Likewise, according to the results of a study conducted by Meyer et al. (2002), it was concluded that the perception of supportive culture in particular increased employees' affective and normative commitment to the organization. Moreover, it was determined that positive perceptions of organizational justice and organizational culture together have a higher influence on employees' organizational commitment than their individual positive influence. There exist findings in the literature stating that both organizational justice and organizational culture increase employees' organizational commitment. According to Mulford (2007) successful school leaders promoted a culture of collegiality, collaboration, support and trust, and that this culture was firmly rooted in their democratic and social justice values

and beliefs. Therefore, it can be concluded that if teachers perceive organizational culture and organizational justice highly, this will also increase their commitment to their organization.

It can be argued that continuance commitment occurs due to people's perception that they will suffer financially or their job prospects will be limited. Likewise, normative commitment emerges as a result of a moral sense of duty and obligation towards the organization. On the other hand, it can be said that affective commitment, which is a result of identification with the organization, is a more internalized kind of commitment. In this case, the fact that organizational justice and organizational culture are more effective on affective commitment can be taken to mean that justice and culture are indispensable concepts for organizations.

According to the results of the t test obtained as a result of the study regarding the significance of the regression coefficients, it has been determined that procedural justice, power and success culture are predictive variables of organizational commitment in the affective commitment sub-dimension. On the other hand, power and role cultures in the continuance commitment sub-dimension, as well as power and support cultures in the normative commitment sub-dimension, are predictive variables of organizational commitment, respectively. These results indicate that the power culture is the predictive variable of all three sub-dimensions. According to  $\beta$  i man (2007), hierarchy is important in power culture and power is in the hands of certain people. Emphasis is laid on concepts such as power, status, control and obedience. Authority usually belongs to senior managers. Vertical communication rather than horizontal communication, control and obedience are highlighted in the organization. A highly authoritarian management approach is dominant. The assumptions of the X theory regarding human nature are valued. The fact that power culture is a predictive variable for the three sub-dimensions of organizational commitment can be a result of employees having to act in accordance with the expectations of those who hold power. According to Akinci Vural (2003), when employees understand perfectly

what those in power expect of them and act accordingly, they begin to feel a greater commitment to the goals of the organization. However, when good relations cannot be established between employees and those in power, in organizations where power culture is dominant, this may lead the employees to lose motivation and subsequently leave the job.

School staffs may not respond positively to the language of power, authority and influence, but in the decision-making process it is important to distinguish these, and to understand them in the context of the culture of school leadership. In the process of policy formulation and decision-making in schools, power is a resource, authority is legitimate and recognized power, and influencing is a personal skill and part of the leadership process. These may be mutually supportive (Tomlinson, 2004). So, instead of authority and power, school principals should use leadership characteristics and effects during the management process.

According to the results of the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), the significance order of the predictive variables is: procedural justice variable in the affective commitment sub-dimension; and power culture variable in the continuance commitment and normative commitment. When it is considered that procedural justice is usually related to the decision-making process in organizations, it can be said that participation in the decision-making process and having control are important factors in affective commitment. Nonetheless, power culture is usually more effective on teachers' continuance and normative commitments to their organizations. It is logical to think that power culture is an important variable in that employees decide to stay in the organization thinking that if they leave the job, they will suffer financially because of this and their job prospects will be limited. The limited job opportunities at the time when the study was conducted, owing to the global economic crisis, may have increased employees' continuance commitment to their organization. It is also observed that the power culture which is dominant in the organization is influential in the employee's belief that they must not quit the organization due to a moral sense of duty, and that they must stay in the organization because it is an obligation. According to Lambert (1999), leadership requires the redistribution of power and authority. Shared learning, purpose, action, and responsibility demand the realignment of power and authority. As a result of the research, it is observed that perceived power culture in organization increases teachers' normative commitment more than their affective commitment. But, according to Mottaz (1988), perceived autonomy increases the workers' affective commitment more than the others. So, it can also be influential that school principals share their power and authority with teachers to improve their affective commitment level to school. Starratt (2003) suggested that commitment culture should be created in schools. Because in a culture of commitment, one finds a kind of shared covenant-an unspoken rule that the school

will not work unless everyone is fully involved. There is a feeling of being responsible to each other, a sense of the bonds of loyalty and common ideals, a sharing of common beliefs about teaching and learning, about how children grow, about the social purposes of schools, and about what it means to be a full human being.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

As a result of the study, a significant correlation was found between variables of distributive justice, procedural justice, power culture, role culture, success culture and support culture and teachers' affective, continuance and normative commitment scores. Moreover, it was observed that procedural justice, power and success cultures were predictive variables in the affective commitment sub-dimension, whereas power and role cultures were predictive variables in the continuance commitment sub-dimension, while power and support cultures were predictive variables in the normative commitment sub-dimension.

According to the results obtained from the study, it is believed that taking measures that will increase teachers' organizational commitment, especially reinforcing organizational justice in schools, will be useful. Besides, by highlighting and spreading roles, success and success cultures rather than the power culture perceived in schools may enhance teachers' organizational commitment.

If teachers' perception of organizational justice is positive, this will increase their commitment to their organization. Therefore, it may be useful to revise practices of distributive, interactive and procedural justice in schools.

It is believed that studying other variables that affect organizational commitment in teachers may be useful. In particular, determining other variables that influence teachers' affective commitment to the organization, which means identifying themselves with the organization, and undertaking the necessary work in this regard may increase teachers' job performance. In addition, determining the theories of administration by which school head teachers manage their schools and offering in-service training programmes especially to those who conduct their administrative activities using classical theories of administration.

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