Effect of Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice and Organizational Trust on Affective Commitment

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ABSTRACT
Concepts of organizational commitment, organizational justice and organizational trust have been examined extensively in organizational behavior literature, however, relationships and effects of distributive justice, procedural justice and organizational trust on affective commitment have received scarce attention at Hospital in Turkey. In this paper, we evaluated the relationships and impacts of distributive justice, procedural justice and organizational trust on affective commitment. In this study, hypotheses were tested by multiple regression models with the data from health employees (medical doctors, nurses, medical secretaries, office staff and biomedical technicians) of Kocaeli University Research Hospital in Turkey. Results suggest that the employees’ perceptions of affective commitment is positively affected by their perceptions of distributive justice, procedural justice and organizational trust. Hence, if managers understand this effect and their role in developing and fostering it, they will contribute to increase their organizational performance.

Keywords: affective commitment, distributive justice, procedural justice, organizational trust, hospital and health employees

INTRODUCTION
Concepts of commitment, justice and trust within organization are crucial factors to enhance organizational performance. Investigation of organizational commitment, organizational justice and organizational trust and the relation among them is one of the significant subjects that need to be analysed. Studies on organizational commitment, organizational justice and organizational trust have been investigated extensively for hospitals in Turkey in organizational behavior literature. However, effect of distributive justice, procedural justice and organizational trust on affective commitment have received inadequate attention.

In this study, it is investigated to find out in what extent affective commitment is related to health employees’ (medical doctors, nurses, medical secretaries, office staff and biomedical technicians) trust on their organization, the way they conduct their job and the way they feel to be treated fairly when outputs are evaluated. In accordance with the findings of this study, health employees emphasize the importance of organizational trust and organizational justice in order to increase their commitment to the organization and preserve the sustainability on this matter.

This paper carries on definitions of affective commitment, organizational justice and organizational trust. Relationships and effects within them will explain and determine hypothesis in accordance with the literature. Finally, the results part also presented together with discussion and conclusion part.

Affective Commitment
Organizational commitment is defined as "the strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, the goals and values of the organization, a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization, and a willingness to exert considerable effort to serve the organization " (Porter et al., 1974: 603-609).

Organizational commitment means harmony and interaction between individual values and objectives of the employees and those of the organization. In other words, organizational commitment is a situation which defines the relation between employees and the organization and which helps them to decide to keep on staying with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997: 41-60).
In model of organizational commitment developed by Allen and Meyer (1990), the three dimension were labelled as “affective”, “continuance” and “normative” commitment. Employees with strong affective commitment remain because they want to, those with strong continuance commitment because they need to, and those with strong normative commitment because they feel they ought to do so. (Allen & Meyer, 1990: 3).

Affective commitment results in a situation where the employee or volunteer wants to continue his or her association with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997: 41-60). Affective commitment develops mainly from positive work experiences such as job satisfaction and organizational fairness (Wasti, 2002: 526).

Organizational Justice
Organizational justice emerged as an attempt to describe the role of fairness in the workplace (Lemons and Jones, 2001: 270). In general, researchers have examined organizational justice as two major dimensions; distributive justice and procedural justice.

Distributive justice deals with perceived fairness of outcomes. Distributive justice is predicted to be related mainly to cognitive, affective and behavioral reactions to particular outcomes. (Cohen & Spector, 2001: 280). Employees evaluate whether the result they get is fair (Cohen & Spector, 2001: 278–321). If employees comprehend that there is a distributive justice in the organization as in distribution of resource and reward, they are expected to have positive attitudes towards the organization (Moorman, 1991: 845-855).

Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the process used to make allocation decisions (Korsgaard, Schweiger & Sapienza, 1995: 60-84). Procedural justice focuses on the methods and processes used in decision makings about the output the employees acquire (Cropanzano & Schminke, 2001: 143-171).

Since perceptions on whether procedures in many organization were fair occurred earlier than the perceptions on the fairness of the results, procedural justice is more important than distributional justice in terms of commitment to organization (Alexander and Ruderman,1987, pp. 77-198). However, literature shows that positive perceptions of distributive justice and procedural justice should be associated with higher levels of organizational commitment. Although procedural justice is a better predictor of organizational commitment, some researchers revealed that distributive justice also had a significant effect on organizational commitment (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992: 626-637).

According to Konovsky & Cropanzano ( 1991); organizational justice correlated more strongly with affective commitment than the other two dimensions of organizational commitment. Significant positive correlations have been reported between perceptions of the fairness of organizational policies and affective commitment. Indeed, perceptions of justice seem to play an important role in the formation of affective commitment (Wong, Ngo & Wong, 2002: 583-586).

Organizational justice allows the formation of trust between employees and managers in organization (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993: 527-534). Employees’ positive perceptions of fair within organization increase their levels of trust and commitment (Greenberg, 1990: 399-432).

Organizational Trust
Trust plays a significant role in human relations. So, one of the prerequisites for effective management in organizations is to develop interpersonal and organizational trust. Trust is interrelated with attitudinal and behavioral characteristics of employees and organizations. (Nyhan & Marlowe,1997: 614-635).

Trust is defined as expectations of an employee, groups or organization on activities and decisions which are based on ethical principles and morally righteous and fair. Employees feeling appreciated and honoured in their organization reciprocate to this attitude with their trusts and commitments to the organization (Hosmer, 1995: 379-403). Organizational trust comes from the expectations of the individuals about all the relations and behaviours in the organization (Shockley-Zabalak & others, 2000: 35-48).

Relationships Among Trust, Justice and Commitment within Organizations
Organizational commitment can be defined as the employees’ trust on the objectives and values of the organization, their willingness to accomplish the aims of the organization and remain in the organization (Hunt & Morgan, 1994: 20-38). High levels of organizational trust are positively and causally linked with organizational commitment. Researchers reveal that organizational trust is a significant predictor of organizational commitment (Gilbert & Tang, 1998: 321-338). Empirical studies in different settings have provided evidence for a positive relationship between organizational trust and affective commitment. It seems to be logical to expect that employees’ levels of organizational trust will affect their affective commitment (Geyskens & Steenkamp, 1995: 351-371).

In many studies, the importance of organizational trust has been discussed as the efficiency of behaviour of the individual and the efficiency of group and organizational activities. Consequently, it has been found out that organizational trust and organizational justice are factors that influence organizational commitment (Brehm & Gates, 2002: 25-28).

According to Geyskens & Steenkamp (1995), there is a positive relationship between perceptions of employees’ organizational trust, organizational justice and organizational commitment. If positive feelings about trust and justice are created and sustained in the organization and individuals in the organization assess this as positive as well, this can create a structure to sustain commitment to the organization (Meyer et al., 1995: 709-734). Wong et al. stated that distributive justice, procedural justice and organizational trust correlated with and directly affected affective commitment.

METHODOLOGY
In this study, the impacts of distributive justice, procedural justice and organizational trust on affective commitment are evaluated. The study finds out antecedents of affective commitment of health employees in Kocaeli University Research Hospital. The model used in this study shown in figure 1 proposes that distributive justice, procedural justice and organizational trust are positively related and affect to affective commitment. This study seeks to test the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between health employees’ perceptions of distributive justice and affective commitment.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between health employees’ perceptions of procedural justice and affective commitment.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between health employees’ perceptions of organizational trust and affective commitment.

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive effect of distributive justice, procedural justice and organizational trust on affective commitment.

To test these hypothesis, questionnaires were sent to all 1356 health employees at Kocaeli University Hospital. 594 questionnaires were returned to the researchers representing a response rate of 43.80% and 63 questionnaires were omitted due to missing information and/or mistakes in the answers. The respondents were medical doctors (27.6%), nurses (51.3%), medical secretaries (16.2%), and medical technicians (4.9%). The average job tenure for the sample was 5.36 years. The gender distribution was 40.7% male and 59.3% female, and 63.6% of the sample was married. The demographic and job-context (job status and occupational) characteristics in our sample approximated the proportions observed in the overall Kocaeli University Hospital.

Questionnaire contains the following four scales:
1. Affective commitment: Eight items from the affective commitment scale (Allen and Meyer, 1990) were used to measure health employees’ affective commitment in this study.
2. Distributive justice: Four items from the distributive justice scale (Niehoff and Moorman, 1993) were used to measure distributive justice.
3. Procedural justice: Six items from the procedural justice scale (Niehoff and Moorman, 1993) were used to measure procedural justice.
4. Organizational Trust: Four items from the organizational trust scale (Nyhan and Marlowe, 1997) was used to measure organizational trust.

All items of measures were modified to fit into seven-point Likert-scale format (i.e. 1=extremely disagree and 7=extremely agree).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Table 1 shows the mean values and standard deviations for the variables. Affective commitment and procedural justice have higher mean values than other variables. In addition, affective commitment has the lowest standard deviation. Table 2 shows Cronbach’s alpha and correlations among the variables for this study. Each variable has satisfactory reliability with its coefficient alpha being above 0.70. It can be seen from the table that all variables are correlated with each other. A preliminary examination of the correlations indicates that affective commitment and most of its antecedents are significantly correlated.

Perceptions of the employees’ affective commitment depend on their perceptions of distributive justice and procedural justice. As Gilbert and Tang indicated, perceptions of justice in the organization are a decisive indicator of affective commitment (Gilbert and Tang, 1995, pp. 321-338). Konovsky and Cropanzano stated that organizational justice was strongly correlated with affective commitment (Konovsky and Cropanzano 1991, pp. 698-707). Our results reveal that the correlations between affective commitment and distributive justice and between affective commitment and procedural justice are 0.515 and 0.539 respectfully (both significant at the 0.01 level). The results of our study depict that there is a positive relationship between employees’ perceptions of distributive justice and affective commitment as suggested in Hypothesis 1. As suggested in Hypothesis 2, there is a positive relationship between employees’ perceptions of procedural justice and affective commitment. In addition, this study discloses that distributive justice is a better predictor of affective commitment than procedural justice. The results are in accordance with the results of McFarlin and Sweeney as well.

Researchers also reveal that organizational trust is one of the significant predictors of organizational commitment. Lemons and Jones found significant correlations ranging between 0.41 and 0.61 (Lemons and Jones, 2001, p. 268-280). Our results show that the correlation between affective commitment and organizational trust is 0.587. As suggested in Hypothesis 3, there is a positive relationship between employees’ perceptions of organizational trust and affective commitment. Employees’ organizational trust will reinforce employees’ affective commitment to their organization. Therefore, organizational trust can be considered as an antecedent to affective commitment. These findings are similar to results in organizational behavior literature.

The results of the regression analysis presented in Table 3 show that procedural justice, distributive justice and organizational trust contribute significantly (F = 148.174; p = .000) in explaining affective commitment by predicting 65.6% of the variation. Thus, as suggested in Hypothesis 4, there is a positive effect of procedural justice, distributive justice and organizational trust on affective commitment.

CONCLUSION

Investigation of organizational commitment, justice and trust, and the relationships among them are important research subjects. Trust and justice within an organization facilitate relationships, cooperations and commitment between employees and organizations. Commitment, justice and trust within organizations are effective factors to enhance organizational performance. Employees with affective commitment demonstrate a willingness to exert considerable effort to serve the organization with extra effort in their performances. Level perception of affective commitment has potential to influence organizational effectiveness. The success of organizations is closely related to perceptions of employees’ organizational trust and justice and their affective commitment to the organization.

This study endeavors to make both a theoretical and practical contribution to existing literature. It enhances our understanding of antecedents of affective commitment of health employees. In particular, this is the first study scrutinizing the relationship between the employees’ perceptions of distributive justice, procedural justice, organizational trust and affective commitment at a hospital in Turkish context.

According to the findings of this study, perceptions of justice and trust play an imperative and antecedent role in the formation of affective commitment. Affective commitment is found to be, both significantly and positively, related to distributive justice, perceived procedural justice and perceived organizational trust. Perceptions of the employees’ affective commitment correlate both their perceptions of distributive justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice has more relationship with affective commitment than procedural justice. Perceptions of the employees’ organizational trust has positive correlation their perceptions of employees’ affective commitment. In addition, There is a positive effect of distributive justice, procedural justice and organizational trust on affective commitment. It has shown that higher levels of affective commitment were experienced only when employees had higher levels of perceived distributive justice, perceived procedural justice and perceived organizational trust. Knowing how the justice variables and organizational trust could affective commitment allow managers to take appropriate action to improve
organizational design and human management in hospitals. Thus, with these findings, management can adjust or redesign the organization’s policies and systems of justice to achieve desired outcomes. Managers may play pivotal roles in increasing employees’ attitudes toward them and the organization. As managers communicate clearly and make fair decisions and procedures, employees trust them more and feel affective commitment to their organization. If managers understand this effect and their role in developing and fostering it, they will contribute to increase their organizational performance.

A more comprehensive study can be carried out on a much wider scale. It is expected that findings of such a study and similar studies may reveal to the managers in the organizations that affective commitment and, as a result of it, organizational justice and organizational trust are crucial factors for the employees’ adoption of their organization’s objectives for a successful management.

REFERENCES

**Figure 1.** Hypothesized model of relationship of distributive justice, procedural justice and organizational trust on affective commitment.

**Table 1.** The Means and Standard Deviations of Variables

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>3.9833</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distributive Justice</td>
<td>3.1904</td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedural Justice</td>
<td>3.9611</td>
<td>1.85681</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Trust</td>
<td>3.6017</td>
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**Table 2.** The Cronbach's alpha and Correlations of Variables

<table>
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<th>Distributive Justice</th>
<th>Procedural Justice</th>
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<tr>
<td>Affective Commitment</td>
<td>0.893</td>
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<td>Distributive Justice</td>
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<td>0.515*</td>
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<td>Procedural Justice</td>
<td>0.976</td>
<td>0.539*</td>
<td>0.542*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Trust</td>
<td>0.963</td>
<td>0.587*</td>
<td>0.508*</td>
<td>0.607*</td>
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* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

**Table 3.** Regression Result

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variable Affective Commitment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Model F</td>
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<td>Model $R^2$</td>
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