



ASSESSING THE DIFFERENCES IN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYEES WITH RESPECT TO INDIVIDUAL DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

M. Çağrı PEHLİVANOĞLU*

* Dr. İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi, cpehlivanoglu@yahoo.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-7519-3068

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ABSTRACT

In today's business world, employees' level of organizational commitment is important to achieve organizational success. Each employee's organizational commitment differs from one another. There might be several individual demographic factors behind the differing levels of organizational commitment of employees, which is a topic worthy of being investigated. Therefore, the study investigates the differences that might be created by a set of individual demographic variables, such as status, work experience, age, and education level, on the perception of organizational commitment of the employees. As the measurement tool, one of the most well-known tools of the literature, Meyer & Allen (1991)'s Three Component Model of Organizational Commitment Scale, was used. The questionnaires were distributed based on convenience sampling method to the employees working in trade enterprises in Istanbul. A total of 400 questionnaire forms were distributed and 320 were accepted as valid for statistical analysis. Employee organizational commitment perceptions were examined in all sub-dimensions (affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment) of the scale in terms of demographic variables. T-test, ANOVA and Tukey tests were used for the analysis of the variables. As a result of the analyses, it was determined that some of the demographic variables (status and work experience) do not cause any difference in the average organizational commitment scores of employees; while others, namely age and education level lead to a difference. Finally, some suggestions were made for future researchers regarding the analysis of demographic variables and sample selection.

Keywords : Organizational Commitment, Individual Demographic Variables, Age, Education Level

JEL-Classification: M12, C12, C13



1. INTRODUCTION

Today, it is not easy for the employees to maintain their organizational commitment due to increased competition, communication, globalization, global economic crises, and pandemics. The communication between employees in different sectors and businesses has increased, and thus, positive or negative information about workplaces can spread rapidly among individuals. Changes in the business life are experienced very quickly and employees can be simply laid off by companies to curtail their costs. Therefore, the relations between the employer and the employee can easily be damaged. In a similar view, as mentioned in the literature by Özdevecioğlu (2003), companies' downsizing or rightsizing activities harm the relations of employees with their organizations. However, for an organization to achieve a robust growth, the emotional bond of the employees to the company should be strong (Bolat & Bolat, 2008). Researches in the literature indicate that emotional commitment is the result of employees' identification with the organization; and having trust in the organization affects employees' commitment positively (Demirel, 2008). Yıldırım et. al. (2015) states that losing qualified and experienced employees, especially in areas requiring advanced and high-cost training, brings about various expenses such as training costs for companies. To find solutions to strengthen the organizational commitment of employees, it is important to know the individual demographic factors that might point to a differentiation in the organizational commitment perceptions of the employees.

Accordingly, this research has three main objectives: (1) To review the existing literature on organizational commitment and its dimensions; (2) to examine the demographic factors (status, work experience, age and education level) that might cause differences in organizational commitment perceptions of employees; (3) to investigate and discuss the findings on the perceptual differences of the research sample in the light of previous literature. In terms of the analysis of demographic factors, there are many studies in the literature that concern the testing of the relationship between these individual variables and organizational commitment. Results vary from research to research depending on the demographics of the respondents forming the samples. Examining the test results of a numerously-tested perception scale of the organizational commitment literature, created by Meyer and Allen (1991), could present reliable and significant results. The findings might contribute to the literature in the context of providing reliable results and help future researchers on their preference of choice of demographic focus on participants in their researches.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational commitment is a feeling that can exist in any organizational environment where people are together. This feeling is the dedication of the individual to a person or to an institution. From the employer's side, it is important that employees feel connected to the institution they work for because it is known that committed individuals do their best for the well-being of the organization. Researches on organizational commitment aim to understand the reasons why employees are working in that particular workplace or prefer to work there (Örücü & Kışlalıoğlu, 2014). Organizations need employees with high organizational commitment to have sustainable competitive advantage in the global competitive environment. These employees show supportive behaviors towards achieving the organizational goals (Sürücü & Maşlakçı, 2018; Angle & Perry, 1981; Sujatha et.al., 2013), and they generally participate in management activities, displaying a creative and innovative attitude (Durna & Eren, 2005). Therefore, companies keep seeking methods to increase the loyalty and commitment of their employees. At this point, the coincidence of the goals and values of both the organization and employee is determinative.²

Organizational commitment has been investigated in detail by various researchers. Examples of some of the studies frequently cited in the field were conducted by Etzioni (1961), Kanter (1968); Buchanan II (1974); Mowday et. al. (1979); O'Reilly and Chatman (1986); Meyer and Allen (1991). All these researchers have identified organizational commitment under certain dimensions. Etzioni (1961) examined organizational commitment in three dimensions: moral commitment, computational commitment, and alienation. Kanter (1968) classified organizational commitment in three categories: continuance commitment, compliance commitment and control commitment. Buchanan II (1974) also described organizational commitment with three factors: identification-adoption as one's own the goals and values of the organization, involvement-psychological immersion or absorption in the activities of one's work role, and loyalty-a feeling of affection for and attachment to the organization. Similarly, Mowday et. al. (1979) characterized organizational commitment through three factors, which are a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) reviewed the concept in a physiological perspective, mentioning that individuals show commitment to the organization to



achieve rewards and eliminate punishments, which is also analyzed from three dimensions, which are stated as compliance, identification, and internalization. Meyer and Allen (1991) argued three components of employee's commitment that correspond with different psychological states and these are indicated as affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

In the literature, most of the researchers tend to approach the concept with three different dimensions. As mentioned previously, with regards to some of the other researches (for example, Wong & Tong, 2014), Meyer and Allen (1991)'s model have contributed to the organizational commitment concept by integrating the findings of Mowday et. al. (1979). Allen & Meyer's three-component approach (affective, continuance and normative commitment) is a model that has been frequently preferred by the researchers who are working on organizational commitment. The degree of commitment of individuals to their organizations may result from different individual demographic reasons. These demographic factors are personal; and thus, vary from individual to individual. Mowday et. al. (1979) indicate that organizational commitment scales should be tested between different professions and employees with different demographic characteristics. In parallel with the opinions of the authors, the demographic variables were examined in this study. Within this framework, the next section will be focus on the methodology and hypotheses of the research. Subsequently, the results will be discussed with respect to the past findings on demographic variables in the literature.

3. Research Methodology

This research is a quantitative study whose research data were gathered by means of questionnaires. The study was carried out to examine the differences in the organizational commitment average scores of the employees with respect to the demographic variables such as status, age, work experience and education level. A five-point Likert type scale was used for measurement. The research was conducted by IBM SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 23.0 software. Explanatory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were performed to determine the construct validity of the scales. Composite reliability and Cronbach α values were calculated to specify the reliability of the scales. *T-test* was used to determine the relationships between organizational commitment and status groups, while *ANOVA* and *Tukey* tests were employed for organizational commitment and the individual demographic variable groups.



3.1 Hypotheses of The Research

The following hypotheses are tested for all dimensions. In total, there are twelve hypotheses in the present study, which are indicated below:

Status Groups:

H₁₁ = There is a significant difference in the affective commitment avg. scores with respect to status groups.

H₁₂ = There is a significant difference in the continuance com. avg. scores with respect to status groups.

H₁₃ = There is a significant difference in the normative com. avg. scores with respect to status groups.

Work Experience Groups:

H₂₁ = There is a significant difference in the affective com. avg. scores with respect to work experience groups.

H₂₂ = There is a significant difference in the continuance com. avg. scores with respect to work experience groups.

H₂₃ = There is a significant difference in the normative com. avg. scores with respect to work experience groups.

Age Groups:

H₃₁ = There is a significant difference in the affective com. avg. scores with respect to age groups.

H₃₂ = There is a significant difference in the continuance com. avg. scores with respect to age groups.

H₃₃ = There is a significant difference in the normative com. avg. scores with respect to age groups.

Education Level Groups:

H₄₁ = There is a significant difference in the affective com. avg. scores with respect to education level groups.

H₄₂ = There is a significant difference in the continuance com. avg. scores with respect to education level groups.

H₄₃ = There is a significant difference in the normative com. avg. scores with respect to education level groups.

3.1. Measures and Sampling

In this research, one of the most well-known organizational commitment perception scales of the literature, Meyer & Allen (1991)'s Three Component Model of Organizational Commitment (will be named as TCM), was used for statistical analysis. This scale was chosen for the analysis of organizational commitment of employees in this study because (a) the reliability of this scale has been widely tested by various researchers, and provided statistically



significant results in the past (Shore & Tetrick, 1991; McGee & Ford, 1987) and (b) this scale is a well-known and still frequently-used measurement tool regarding the organizational commitment literature. The measurement tool consists of 18 items and has three dimensions: affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment. According to this model, employees can experience all three forms of commitment in different levels. In the original scale, all the items are collected on a Likert-type 7-level measurement tool. In this research the measurement tool is converted to a Likert-type 5-level scale. The levels of the scales are as follows: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree.

The questionnaires were distributed to the white-collar employees working in enterprises which operate in the trade companies in Istanbul. To determine the sample size, power analysis technique was conducted. 400 questionnaires were distributed between March-June 2019 by convenience sampling method. Finally, 350 of the respondents replied to the questionnaires and 320 of them were found to be valid for the statistical analysis. In terms of power, 90% is achieved at 95% confidence interval. The distribution of the sample is as follows: 137 managers, 183 non-managers; 20% of the sample is between 18-29 years old, 36% is 30-39 years old, 27% is 40-49 years old, 12% is 50-59 years old, 5% is +60 years old; as for the experience, 20% of the respondents have 0-5 years of work experience, 17% have 6-10 years, 20% have 11-15 years, 15% have 16-20 years, and 28% have +21 years; 10% of the sample has a high school degree, %10 has an associate degree, 50% of the sample has a university degree, %30 has a postgraduate degree.

3.2 Analyses of Dimensionality, Validity and Reliability

As the first step, to determine the adequacy and suitability of the sample, Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett sphericity test statistics were examined with respect to Beavers et. al. (2013)'s threshold test limits which are KMO greater than 0.60 and significant Bartlett test result. KMO coefficient of organizational commitment scale was 0.846 with significant Bartlett statistical test result ($p = 0.00$). The results indicate that the sample was enough and appropriate for forward analysis. As the second step, factorial structure of the scale was evaluated by Explanatory Factor Analysis (EFA) All of the items were taken into the analysis. Only the variables that have a value of 0.50 and above were included in the final scales. As the result of EFA, 15 out of 18 of the items passed the threshold levels. The remaining three items (VAR01, VAR03, VAR11) were excluded from the analysis. As the third step, reliability analysis was performed for each dimension and for the whole scale. To determine the internal consistency



of the scale, Cronbach's alpha reliability was preferred. In this analysis, the Cronbach's alpha values should be at least $\alpha \geq 0.60$ (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The analysis in Table 1 shows that reliability of all the scales and dimensions were found to be higher than the expected level.

Table 1. The Cronbach's Alpha values

Scales and Dimensions	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Organizational Commitment	15	0.834
Affective Commitment	4	0.762
Continuance Commitment	5	0.701
Normative Commitment	6	0.783

As the fourth step, the convergent validity of the scale was investigated by running Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Under this analysis, the goodness of fit statistics, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) values were reviewed. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 2 and Table 3. All AVE (above 0.50) and CR (above 0.70) values were found to be beyond the threshold levels (Yaşlıoğlu, 2017; Ahmad et. al., 2016). The goodness of fit statistics is also found to be acceptable with respect to Bagozzi & Yi (2012)'s given threshold values in the literature. Chi-square/Degrees of Freedom = $\chi^2/df < 3$ (OC 2.40), RMSEA ≤ 0.06 (OC 0.04), CFI ≥ 0.95 (OC 0.97), GFI ≥ 0.95 (OC 0.97) and SRMR < 0.08 (OC 0.62). The results of CFA showed the convergent validity and general fit of the scale.

Table 2. CR, Correlation Coefficient and AVE values

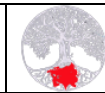
Dimensions	Number of items	CR	AVE	1	2	3
1. Affective Commitment	4	0.813	0.718			
2. Continuance Commitment	5	0.806	0.670	0.221		
3. Normative Commitment	6	0.849	0.693	0.475	0.448	

3.4 Tests of Hypotheses

In this part of the study, the results regarding the hypotheses tests are given. The results of each hypothesis test are presented under the relevant individual demographic variable.

3.4.1 Status

In this hypothesis, the respondents' organizational commitment scores for all the dimensions with respect to status (manager / non-manager) groups were investigated by using *T-test*. As a result of the analysis, it has been observed that there was not any significant difference between the affective, continuance and normative organizational commitment average scores of status groups. Therefore, H_{11} , H_{12} and H_{13} were rejected.

**Table 3.** *T-test* for Status groups

Dimensions	Variance	T	Df	F	Sig.
Affective Commitment	Equal variances assumed	1,694	318	,060	,807
	Equal variances not assumed	1,697	302,526		
Continuance Commitment	Equal variances assumed	,880	318	1,564	,212
	Equal variances not assumed	,889	303,488		
Normative Commitment	Equal variances assumed	1,073	318	,481	,489
	Equal variances not assumed	1,070	290,122		

3.4.2. Work Experience

In this hypothesis, the respondents' organizational commitment scores for all the dimensions with respect to the work experience (1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, +21 years) groups were investigated by one-way *ANOVA* analysis. The assumptions of *ANOVA*, independence of cases, normality and homoscedasticity were tested prior to the analyses, and they were all found to be fulfilled. As a result of one-way *ANOVA* analysis, it has been observed that there is not a significant difference between the affective, continuance and normative organizational commitment average scores of work experience groups. Therefore, H_{21} , H_{22} and H_{23} were rejected. Post Hoc test was not applied since there was no significant difference.

Table 4. *ANOVA* for Work Experience groups

Dimensions	Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Affective Commitment	Between Groups	2,256	3	,564	0,749	,559
	Within Groups	237,094	316	,753		
	Total	239,350	319			
Continuance Commitment	Between Groups	4,316	3	1,079	1,514	,198
	Within Groups	224,503	316	,713		
	Total	228,820	319			
Normative Commitment	Between Groups	1,666	3	,417	,512	,727
	Within Groups	256,134	316	,813		
	Total	257,800	319			

3.4.3. Age

In this hypothesis, the respondents' organizational commitment scores for all the dimensions with respect to age (18-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years, 50-59 years, +60 years) groups were investigated by one-way *ANOVA* analysis. The assumptions of *ANOVA*, independence of cases, normality and homoscedasticity were tested prior to the analyses, and they were all found to be fulfilled. It has been observed that there was not any significant difference between the affective and normative organizational commitment average scores of age groups. However, a significant



relationship was observed between the continuance commitment average scores of age groups. In this analysis, H_{31} , H_{33} were rejected and H_{32} was accepted. A Post Hoc multiple comparison was done, and Tukey test was applied. Finally, it was determined that as the employees got older, their continuance commitment average scores also increased, while affective commitment average scores decreased, respectively.

Table 5. ANOVA for Age groups

Dimensions	Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Affective Commitment	Between Groups	7,142	3	1,785	2,422	0,041
	Within Groups	232,208	316	,737		
	Total	239,350	319			
Continuance Commitment	Between Groups	7,717	3	1,929	2,748	0,028
	Within Groups	221,103	316	,702		
	Total	228,820	319			
Normative Commitment	Between Groups	5,137	3	1,284	1,601	0,174
	Within Groups	252,663	316	,802		
	Total	257,800	319			

3.4.4 Education Level

In this hypothesis, the respondents' organizational commitment scores for all the dimensions with respect to education level (high school degree, associate degree, university degree, postgraduate degree) groups were investigated by one-way ANOVA analysis. The assumptions of ANOVA, independence of cases, normality and homoscedasticity were tested prior to the analyses, and they were all found to be fulfilled. It has been observed that there was not any significant difference between the affective and normative organizational commitment average scores of age groups, however, a significant relationship was observed between the continuance commitment average scores of age groups. In this analysis, H_{41} , H_{43} were rejected and H_{42} was accepted. A Post Hoc multiple comparison was done, and Tukey test was applied. Finally, it was determined that as the education level of the employees got better, their continuance commitment average scores increased, respectively.

**Table 6.** ANOVA for Education Level groups

Dimensions	Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Affective Commitment	Between Groups	,626	3	,209	0,276	0,642
	Within Groups	237,723	316	,755		
	Total	239,350	319			
Continuance Commitment	Between Groups	8,315	3	2,772	3,972	0,008
	Within Groups	220,505	316	,698		
	Total	228,820	319			
Normative Commitment	Between Groups	5,917	3	1,972	2,474	0,062
	Within Groups	251,883	316	,797		
	Total	257,800	319			

4. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to investigate the differences created by the individual demographic variables on the perception of organizational commitment of employees. It was determined that some of the demographic variables (education level and age) do not cause any difference between the analyzed groups, while others (status and work experience) do. The results are in line with some of the findings in the literature. In this section of the study, each individual demographic variable will be evaluated separately.

In the literature, the difference created by the “status” demographic factor on the organizational commitment of employees has been found significant in some of the studies (Chaudhry & Sain, 2014; Avcı & Erdem, 2017; Shahid & Zain, 2018), and not significant in some others (Baysal et. al., 2014; Tekin et. al., 2014; Yeşilkaya, 2015; Tüfekci, 2018). Avcı & Erdem (2017) mention that by using TCM, the difference in affective commitment and continuance commitment does not have a significant effect on status; however, normative commitment differs significantly by status. According to Shahid & Zain (2018), the relationship between employee’s position and designation, and affective organizational commitment is significant. From their perspective, higher status in an organization might enjoy the better salary, power, and authority. Similarly, based on the research test result of Chaudhry & Sain (2014), managers had a higher level of organizational commitment than non-managers. In this study, there was not any significant difference revealed between the affective, continuance and normative organizational commitment average scores of status groups. This insignificant result emphasizes that based on this research, employee’s organizational commitment is not related to whether being a manager or not.



In the literature, the difference created by the “work experience” individual demographic factor on the organizational commitment of employees has been found not significant in some researchers (Yilmazer, 2010; Fettahlioğlu & Tatlı, 2015; Babadağ, 2015) and significant in some others (Sujatha et. al., 2013; Tekin et.al., 2014). Some of the findings of researches by using Meyer and Allen (1991)’s TCM and its dimensions are as follows: Sujatha, Swathi, & Seema (2013) found out that the employees with 0-5 years of experience have more of continuance commitment compared to other employees, and there is a high level of affective commitment among 6-15 years of experienced employees; Tekin et.al., (2014) observed that increasing work experience was associated with increasing affective commitment and decreasing normative commitment. Significant results on this factor is are usually interpreted that as the work experience of the individual increases, more salary and better status are more likely to be achieved by time. The tested levels of work experience differ from research to research depending on the demographic questions on the questionnaires, so the results also differ from one another. In this study, there was not any significant difference between the affective, continuance and normative organizational commitment perception average scores of work experience groups.

In the literature, the difference created by the “age” demographic factor on the organizational commitment of employees has been found significant in some of the studies (Meyer et.al., 1993; Jena, 2015; Rana & Singh, 2016; Tekin, et.al., 2014; Lok & Crawford, 1999; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Sommer et.al., 1996), and not significant in some others (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006; Şener, 2013; Karadağ et. al., 2013; Yeşilkaya, 2015; Visanh & Xu, 2018). According to the study of Meyer et. al.(1993), age is positively correlated with continuance commitment and negatively with affective commitment. By using the same scale, Tekin et. al. (2014) and Jena (2015) identified a statically significant and positive relationship between different age groups with respect to their affective and normative commitments. In this study, the finding was parallel to the results obtained by Meyer et. al. (1993): as the employees got older, their continuance commitment perception average scores also increased, while affective commitment perception average scores decreased. The general belief in studies that achieve significant results is that organizational commitment will increase with respect to individuals’ increasing age. The main reason for this is the fact that leaving the company becomes riskier for the individuals as they get older (Babadağ, 2015; Abdulla & Shaw, 1999). A possible explanation of this relationship is that older people at workplace are more realistic and have lower expectations, employment



options are also limited due to age (Mowday et al., 1982) and leaving has more costs for them than staying (Parasuraman & Nachman, 1987).

In the literature, the difference created by the “education level” demographic factor on the organizational commitment of employees has been found significant in some researches (Iqbal, 2010; Azeez et.al., 2016; Örucü & Kışlalıoğlu, 2014) and not significant (Al-Meer, 1989; Suri & Petchsawang, 2018; Guyo & K’Obonyo, 2019) in some others. Researchers mention that employees with a high education level tend to have less organizational commitment. The biggest reason for this is that people with a better education level can find jobs more easily whereas people with a low level of education have more commitment to their current jobs since they have fewer opportunities to find alternative jobs (Abdullah & Shaw, 1999). By using TCM scale, Azeez et.al. (2016) observed that educational qualification had a significant effect on affective and continuance commitment dimensions. Örucü & Kışlalıoğlu (2014) found that there is a difference between affective commitment levels of employees according to their educational level, however, there is no difference in terms of continuance and normative commitment levels. In this study, there was not any significant difference between the affective and normative organizational commitment perception average scores of education level groups, however, there was a significant difference found in continuance commitment perception average scores of employees. It was determined that as the education level of the employees got better, their continuance commitment average scores increased respectively.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In the literature, it was observed that the findings between the demographic variables and organizational commitment vary depending on the respondents, demographic questionnaires, and scales. In some studies of the management literature, researchers criticize that demographic variables are weak and inconsistent predictors of commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Rana & Singh, 2016). By considering the findings of this study alone, it cannot be concluded that individual demographic variables do or do not create differences in the level of organizational commitment of individuals or specified groups. The research has some limitations and the results need to be evaluated within this framework.

This research has several recommendations for future researchers in terms of the content of individual demographic variable questionnaires. While designing the questionnaires, besides status, work experience, age, and education level some other demographic variables such as

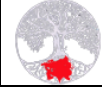


marital status, gender, type of employment (in terms of job contract), and salary could also be added in the researches. It can also be recommended that future researchers diversify the status variable (manager/nonmanager) and add some hierarchical levels (such as bottom, middle, top management) into the questionnaires. Another demographic examination could be conducted on organizational demographic variables such as the size of the company (in terms of the number of employees and turnover), the number of departments, the industry of the company (trade, service, production etc.), working hours, incentive programs for employees, and working options (home office etc.).

Research findings are limited to the perceptions of a single sample consisting of 320 employees and one measurement tool. The scope of the research consists of employees working in enterprises that operate only in the trade companies in Istanbul. By working with various organizational commitment measurement tools, increasing the sample sizes, and expanding the questionnaires to other industries, more comprehensive analyses can be conducted and compared with the results of the existing literature.

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