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Examining the Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Organizational Silence of Teachers

Devrim BAYRAMOGLU¹, Canan A. CETINKANAT²

Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational silence of teachers. While there is a lot of work regarding the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational silence, it has been observed that there are few studies on teachers. At this point, the study was considered significant and it was thought that it should be performed. In order to accomplish the purpose of the study, a survey was conducted to the teachers. According to the results of reliability analysis of organizational commitment scale which was used in the research, while Cronbach's alpha coefficients is 0.745, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the organizational silence questionnaire is 0.89. The population of the research consisted of teachers who were affiliated with the Ministry of National Education and Culture and who were working in the elementary schools in Northern Cyprus, in the 2018-2019 academic year. The sample consisted of teachers from 28 different schools in the Guzelyurt, Kyrenia, and Nicosia regions. In this quantitative study, a total of 387 teachers, who were enrolled as participants, took organizational commitment and organizational silence scales. As a result of the analyses, it has been found that there is a significant negative relationship between the two.

Keywords: organizational commitment, organizational silence, elementary teachers, education, social entities, educational institutions.

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Introduction

Organizations established to achieve a specific purpose are social entities that are connected to the external environment (Brinsfield, Edwards, & Greenberg, 2009). Organizations follow a number of ways to maintain their existence and achieve their goals. In recent years, changing environmental factors, human needs, increasing competition conditions, and people's knowledge on many issues have led organizations to constantly renew and develop themselves (Brett, Cron, & Slocum, 1995; Brinsfield, Edwards, & Greenberg, 2009). The researchers also show that the most important factor in the success of the organization is the personnel working there. This research was carried out in educational institutions, which are the most important organizations related to human education. Schools are responsible for educating and developing self-determined and single-minded individuals who can express their ideas in the best manner (Darwish, 2000). Besides the education they receive here, the morale and motivation of the student is also important for their future academic life. For this, teachers have a great responsibility. Therefore, it is thought that there is a relationship between student success and teacher's behavior. In this study, it is aimed to investigate the relationship between teachers and organizational commitment and organizational silence, which has been an important issue in institutions recently.

Literature review

Therefore, the schools are also affected by the environmental conditions and must adapt themselves to these conditions when they change. For this reason, it is necessary to take precautions against external and internal problems and eliminate the situations which may reduce the development, effectiveness, and efficiency in and thus affect the success of the school (Nikmaram *et al.*, 2012). The decrease of employees' commitment to the institution will negatively affect the institution and cause the employees to exhibit silence behavior. Based on this idea that teachers' commitment and silence behavior play an important role in the school environment, we aimed to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational silence of elementary school teachers.

The concept of organizational commitment, which is defined as the expression of the employee's attachment to the organization, has been studied by researchers from many different disciplines (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Varoglu, 1993; Balay, 1999; Demirel, 2009; Çetin, Basim, & Aydogan; Ozdemir, 2014). For an organization to be more efficient and to maintain its existence, it is of great importance for employees to act in line with the objectives and requests of that organization. For this reason, organizations should make optimum use of

manpower (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979), and the importance of organizational commitment is emphasized in many studies (Milliken & Morrison, 2003; Ward & Davis, 1995; Wallace, 1995; Salha *et al.*, 2016). Organizations need to increase productivity, to keep qualified people under their umbrella, and to ensure that they continue to work as individuals committed to their organization (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Otherwise, the negative atmosphere experienced in the organization affects the employees adversely, which affects their efficiency and performance of the activities in the organization (Tutar, 2000). As Balci (2003) stated in his study, employees with organizational commitment are more adaptable, more contented, and more productive, and they will be highly motivated with a high degree of responsibility and loyalty.

The other variable of the study is the concept of organizational silence, which has been the subject of many different studies (Alparslan, 2010; Bayram, 2010; Bildik, 2009; Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; Eroglu, Adiguzel, & Ozturk, 2011; Dogan & Kir, 2018; Pinder & Harlos, 2001; Morrison & Milliken, 2003). Although silence is perceived as a passive behavior and interpreted as accepting and adapting to everything, it could actually mean reacting and rebelling as well (Brett, Cron, & Slocum, 1995). In addition to being an obstacle to organizational development, organizational silence leads to a decrease in employees' commitment to the organization (Brinsfield, Edwards, & Greenberg, 2009), a decrease in morale and motivation (Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003), and an increase in inter-organizational conflicts that obstruct change and innovation (Laeque & Bakhtawari, 2014). Most of the time, employees prefer to remain silent due to the fact that they do not want to take their colleagues on, or they think that their ideas and opinions will not be supported; they might also not want to appear as problematic (Florkowski & Schuster, 1992). Therefore, low morale and motivation in employees who exhibit silence behavior will lead to an increase in behaviors such as being late for work, absenteeism, and quitting (Morrison & Milliken 2000). Organizational silence is not very desirable in institutions. This situation can have a negative effect on the success of institutions (Bagheri, Zarei, & Aeen, 2012:52; Xueming, 2013: 562). With the information and theoretical framework provided by the literature in mind, the aim of this study was to determine the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational silence of the school organization. Studying the relationship of these variables, in a Turkish context, will create a baseline for Turkish literature to tackle organizational silence and promote organizational commitment. In addition, this study will guide subsequent research studies by means of providing them opportunities to conduct meta analytic study.

Methodology

Research Objective

The objective of this study is to determine the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational silence of teachers working in elementary schools in Northern Cyprus.

Research questions

1. Is there a meaningful relationship between organizational commitment and organizational silence?
2. Do organizational commitment and organizational silence show significant differences according to age, gender, and marital status?

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of teachers working in the Elementary Schools in the Kyrenia, Nicosia, and Guzelyurt districts of the Ministry of National Education and Culture of Northern Cyprus in the 2018-2019 academic years.

Data Collection Tool

In this study, the survey method was used as a data collection tool. The survey was conducted between 15/01/2019 and 19/04/2019. The questionnaire began with the “personal information” form, which included the gender, age, marital status, educational background, branch, seniority, term of office, and graduated faculty. All of these independent variables were measured on ordinal scales. The “Organizational Silence Scale,” which was developed by Kahveci (2010), was used to determine the organizational silence perceptions of teachers, while the “Organizational Commitment Scale,” which was developed by Meyer and Allen (1991), was used to determine employee loyalty in organizations. The Maximum Diversity Sampling method was used to determine the research sample. In accordance with this method, 387 people were contacted out of a population of 970 teachers. Prior to data collection, all necessary permissions from the authors of inventories were elicited, and participant consent forms were distributed to all participants to maintain consistency and to cover ethical concerns.

Results

Since the observation results of both variables were continuous, the relationship between these variables was considered using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients. The results of the correlation analysis showed that there is a significant negative correlation ($r=-.23$) between organizational commitment and organizational silence. The correlation analysis of the variables subject to the research is given in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Correlation coefficients regarding continuous variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Organizational commitment	61.7519	9.37588	387
Organizational silence	144.2158	39.04761	387
Correlations			
		OC	OS
Organizational commitment (OC)	Pearson Correlation	1	-.225**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	387	387
Organizational silence (OS)	Pearson Correlation	-.225**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	387	387

The findings showing the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational silence with the age variable are given in *Table 2*.

Table 2. Correlation coefficients regarding dependent variables

		OC	OS	Age
OC	Pearson Correlation	1	-.225**	-.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.134
	N	387	387	387
OS	Pearson Correlation	-.225**	1	-.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.192
	N	387	387	387
Age	Pearson Correlation	-.076	-.066	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.134	.192	
	N	387	387	387

The age variable showed a very low and negative relationship in terms of the two variables defined. In other words, there is no significant relationship between age and the organizational commitment and organizational silence. The results of the t-test analysis according to the gender variable of organizational commitment and organizational silence are given in *Table 3*.

Table 3. The Results of the t-test analysis according to the gender variable of organizational commitment and organizational silence

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
AFFCOM	Female	294	23.2619	4.61369	.26908
	Male	93	21.8710	4.36694	.45283
CONCOM	Female	294	21.0102	4.36358	.25449
	Male	93	19.9892	4.18459	.43392
NORMCOM	Female	294	17.8741	5.07498	.29598
	Male	93	18.6452	4.71271	.48869
SCHOOLENV	Female	294	28.4184	7.88181	.45968
	Male	93	28.8441	7.17180	.74368
EMOTION	Female	294	31.5306	9.70363	.56593
	Male	93	31.7563	8.98995	.93221
SILENSOURCE	Female	294	27.4286	9.29457	.54207
	Male	93	26.7742	8.55688	.88731
ADMIN	Female	294	28.8095	11.83168	.69004
	Male	93	28.3513	11.11668	1.15275

ISOLATON	Female	294	28.0045	11.06851	.64553
	Male	93	28.5663	9.40754	.97552
OC	Female	294	62.1463	9.42307	.54956
	Male	93	60.5054	9.16352	.95021
OS	Female	294	144.1916	39.91745	2.32803
	Male	93	144.2921	36.36657	3.77104

Table 3 was examined by an independent sample t-test to figure out whether organizational commitment sub-variables and organizational silence sub-variables differed significantly in terms of gender of the participants. Parametric measurements were preferred because the variances of the distributions calculated by Levene's Test were not different from the normal distribution parameters.

Analysis revealed that there was a significant difference in terms of the affective commitment subscale of the organizational commitment between women and men $t(385) = 2.566$, $p = .009$ in favour of women. However, no significant difference was observed between women and men in terms of normative commitment $t(385) = 2.566$, $p = .009$.

In terms of organizational silence, women scored slightly higher in the source of silence and executive sub-dimensions compared to men, and men scored higher in other dimensions of organizational silence compared to women. However, in terms of the sub-dimensions of organizational silence, these differences recorded between men and women were considered to be insignificant.

When the differences between men and women were examined on the basis of the total scores of organizational commitment and organizational silence, women perceived higher in organizational commitment while with men, there was very little difference in terms of organizational silence, and no statistically significant difference was found between these variables.

Differences in terms of marital status of the participants were examined by one-way analysis of variance. Organizational commitment subscales and organizational silence subscales showed no statistically significant difference in terms of subgroups of independent variables. Although the difference between them is meaningless, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation values were found to be higher in those with single marital status in terms of affective commitment and continuance than those married or divorced, whereas in regard to normative commitment, those with a divorced marital status perceived this at a higher level than those who were married or single. In terms of organizational silence, singles had a higher perception in the isolation, manager, source of silence, and emotion sub-dimensions than those who were married or divorced, while those who were divorced had a higher perception score in terms of the school environment compared to those who were single or married. It is worth noting that there is no statistically significant distinction between these differences (see *Table 4* for parameter estimates).

Table 4. Statistical parameters and estimates regarding study variables

MaritalSta	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Upper Bound			
AFFECTIVECOM	Single	22.6623	4.81393	.54860	21.5697	23.7550	8.00	30.00
	Married	23.0928	4.51911	.26492	22.5714	23.6142	6.00	30.00
	Divorced	21.4737	4.65914	1.06888	19.2280	23.7193	13.00	30.00
	Total	22.9276	4.58878	.23326	22.4690	23.3863	6.00	30.00
CONTINUATIONCOM	Single	20.6883	4.72747	.53874	19.6153	21.7613	10.00	30.00
	Married	20.7835	4.27316	.25050	20.2905	21.2765	9.00	30.00
	Divorced	20.7895	3.86694	.88714	18.9257	22.6533	14.00	29.00
	Total	20.7649	4.33793	.22051	20.3313	21.1984	9.00	30.00
NORMATIVE COM	Single	18.3766	5.25667	.59905	17.1835	19.5697	6.00	30.00
	Married	17.9244	4.92717	.28884	17.3559	18.4929	6.00	30.00
	Divorced	18.8421	5.09099	1.16795	16.3883	21.2959	11.00	30.00
	Total	18.0594	4.99524	.25392	17.5602	18.5587	6.00	30.00
SCHOOLENVIROMENT	Single	29.3182	7.87063	.89694	27.5318	31.1046	10.00	50.00
	Married	28.2131	7.67234	.44976	27.3278	29.0983	10.00	50.00
	Divorced	30.0000	7.63763	1.75219	26.3188	33.6812	20.00	42.50
	Total	28.5207	7.71024	.39193	27.7501	29.2913	10.00	50.00

EMOTION	Single	77	32.0779	10.11685	1.15292	29.7817	34.3742	10.00	50.00
	Married	291	31.4777	9.41958	.55219	30.3909	32.5645	10.00	50.00
	Divorced	19	31.2281	9.10911	2.08977	26.8376	35.6185	10.00	46.67
	Total	387	31.5848	9.52607	.48424	30.6328	32.5369	10.00	50.00
SILENCESOURCE	Single	77	28.0779	8.90560	1.01489	26.0566	30.0992	10.00	46.00
	Married	291	27.1134	9.21155	.53999	26.0506	28.1762	10.00	50.00
	Divorced	19	26.4211	8.73254	2.00338	22.2121	30.6300	10.00	40.00
	Total	387	27.2713	9.11619	.46340	26.3602	28.1824	10.00	50.00
ADMINISTRATION	Single	77	30.0000	11.29094	1.28672	27.4373	32.5627	10.00	50.00
	Married	291	28.3849	11.68993	.68528	27.0361	29.7336	10.00	50.00
	Divorced	19	28.2456	12.73512	2.92164	22.1075	34.3837	10.00	46.67
	Total	387	28.6994	11.65134	.59227	27.5349	29.8639	10.00	50.00
ISOLATION	Single	77	29.9567	10.47824	1.19411	27.5784	32.3350	10.00	50.00
	Married	291	27.6289	10.69564	.62699	26.3948	28.8629	10.00	50.00
	Divorced	19	28.5965	11.07303	2.54033	23.2595	33.9335	10.00	50.00
	Total	387	28.1395	10.68393	.54309	27.0717	29.2073	10.00	50.00

Discussion

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between primary school teachers' organizational commitment and organizational silence perception. The findings obtained as a result of the analyses were discussed in accordance with the body of literature.

The findings of the research show that there is a significant negative correlation between organizational commitment and organizational silence. Accordingly, it was determined that organizational silence decreased in cases of increased organizational commitment. In their study, Morrison & Milliken (2000) state that organizational silence increases behaviors such as being late for work, absenteeism, and quitting, while decreasing employee commitment. Developing mechanisms that enable employees to express themselves freely and without fear within the organization play an important role in increasing organizational commitment (Morrison & Milliken, 2003). Meyer and Allen (1991), argued that all three types of commitment in the three-factor model they developed reduced the intention to leave the organization, but they developed as a result of different factors, and that they also affect work-related behaviors such as job performance other than membership to the organization in different ways. According to the comprehensive analysis of Meyer and Allen (1991), it was found that affective commitment developed as a result of positive work experiences, continuation commitment developed as a result of seniority and lack of alternatives, and normative commitment was associated with personal loyalty norms. Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008) stated that organizational silence is affected by organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Balay (2007), on the other hand, stated that teachers, who have a high sense of commitment to the schoolwork, make more effort for the success of the students. There are many studies determining the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational silence (Ulker & Kanten, 2009; Kahveci, 2010; Eroglu, Adiguzel, & Ozturk, 2011; Çakici, 2014; Kose, 2014; Ozturk, 2014; Ozdemir, 2015; Balli & Çakici, 2016; Can, Demir, & Uçkun, 2017).

According to the findings related to the demographic variables, which indicated that there is no significant relationship between age variable and Organizational Silence, age variable did not affect the teachers' perception of organizational silence. This finding of the research is similar to the studies of some researchers in the related literature (Kahveci, 2010; Kahveci & Demirtas, 2013; Afsar, 2013; Ozturk, 2014; Ozdemir, 2015; Yangin, 2015; Unlu, 2015) showing that there is no significant difference between age variable and the teachers' perceptions of organizational silence. According to the other findings of the study, no significant relationship was found between the age variable and organizational commitment. Therefore, it was determined that the teachers' commitment to their organizations is not related to age. At any age, the person who loves their job, is also committed

to their profession. This finding supports the studies of Morris and Sherman (1981), Karahan (2008), Kursunoglu, Bakay, & Tanriogen (2010), and Oran (2016).

Another finding of the research was that there is no significant difference between gender and organizational silence. Women and men were equally affected by all events that happened in the organization. The findings of this study were parallel with some recent works (Ozturk, 2014; Ozdemir, 2015; Yavuz, Hamedoglu, & Yaman, 2015; Ates, 2015; Apak, 2016; Goven, 2018;). While there was a significant difference between men and women in the affective commitment sub-dimension and continuance commitment sub-dimension, no significant difference was found between the men and women in the normative commitment sub-dimension. This result is thought to be that women are more social than men and are affected by the work environment in different ways. This study partially supports the studies of Alotaibi (2001), Eroglu, Adiguzel, & Ozturk (2011), Oran (2016), and Goven (2018).

According to the result obtained between the organizational commitment sub-dimensions and marital status variable, there was a higher perception of affective commitment and continuance commitment in those who were single, and the mean scores of perceptions of normative commitment were higher in those who were divorced. These results may be due to the fact that single employees are, more typically, completely committed to their profession, and divorced employees, more typically, do not want to risk being unemployed due to family reasons (Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003; Milliken & Morrison, 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

Conclusion

The current study revealed different results from those of Benkhoff (1997), Cohen (1992), Kursunoglu, Bakay, & Tanriogen (2010), and Ozdemir (2014). This difference in results may be due to cultural differences. Traditionally, when we look at the Turkish culture of Cyprus, we see that there is a family structure with parents dominating over their children, regardless of age. In recent years, however, this structure has changed a little because young people go abroad to study for university. Today, young people want to live their own lives, and when the economic conditions of Cyprus are taken into account, they cannot afford to lose their current jobs, so they cling to them.

Singles perceived high in the isolation, manager, source of silence, and affective sub-dimensions in terms of organizational silence, and those who are single remain silent largely due to the behaviors of the administrators (Goven & Senturk, 2019; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). These singles want to continue their lives without being connected to their dominating families, so they prefer to remain silent in order to avoid unrest in the organization (Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008; Wallace, 1995). On the other hand, divorcees, who had a higher perception of organizational silence

due to school environment, are unwilling to look like someone who constantly causes problems in school and opposes everything in the eyes of colleagues and administrators (Premeaux & Bedeian, 2003; Panahi *et al.*, 2012). The fact that there are not enough studies in this subject in the literature to bring deeper insight increases the importance of this study.

In order to make the most of the number one resource in an organization humans the success and continuity of the organization should be ensured through eliminating the source of silence (Florkowski & Schuster, 1992; Luchak, 2003; Pinder & Harlos, 2001) by creating an atmosphere in which employees can express their ideas and share their suggestions without fear, thus giving them a sense of belonging.

Recommendations

There is certain to be a relationship between teachers' organizational source of silence and organizational commitment, and it is suggested that special attention should be paid to such relationships in communities if more determined teachers are desired. In this direction, it is also recommended that efforts to eliminate or weaken the elements that lead to silence behaviour and conditions in various groups and teachers, by extending the factors of an open culture outside the organization or society, and by basic initiatives such as regular and fundamental changes in the organization, to improve the attitudes of the system / structure and top-level organizational authorities should be made. More researches should be done correctly, and recommendations should be given that could help eliminate silence behaviour in various groups and improve variables such as efficient and effective commitment.

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