An Analysis of Organizational Justice and Organizational Identification Relation Based on Teachers' Perceptions

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Abstract

This study intends to analyze the relation between organizational justice and organizational identification based on teachers’ perceptions. The study group consists of 1223 teachers working at secondary and high-schools during the 2015-2016 academic year in 14 county towns of Balikesir in Turkey. The data was collected by Organizational Justice Scale and Organizational Identification Scale. The findings of the study showed that secondary and high school teachers have positive opinions concerning organizational justice and identification. Teachers’ perceptions of organizational justice differ significantly according to their seniority and workplaces. All sub-dimensions of organizational justice were found to be a significant predictor of organizational identification, yet the sub-dimension of procedural justice was found to be the most significant one. Another strong predictor of organizational identification appeared to be interactional justice. Lastly, it was found that distributive justice has little effect on organizational identification.

Keywords Perception, Organizational Justice, Organizational Identification, Teacher

1. Introduction

Positive and effective human relations at educational institutions are of paramount importance for organizational and administrative success. An analysis of the studies on organizational behaviors that have been conducted within the last decade shows that the relation between organizational identification and many other organizational variables has been extensively researched. For example, the relation between organizational identification and organizational commitment and prestige [1], organizational support and work stress [2], cynicism and intention to quit job [3], job satisfaction [4], organizational support and cynicism [5] have all been studied. Although numerous studies have focused on the relation between organizational justice and other organizational variables, and organizational identification and other variables separately [6, 7] few studies have dealt with organizational justice and identification together [8-11].

The present study focuses on the relation between the two, organizational justice and identification, at schools, which are educational organizations. It mainly intends to investigate the connection between the school administrators’ fair treatment to teachers and organizational identification at secondary and high schools.

1.1. Organizational Justice

One definition of organizational justice belongs to Greenberg [12]. Greenberg [12] simply defined the term as employees’ perception of justice in the organization. Similarly, Moorman [13] defined it as employees’ perception of whether they are treated fairly or not. According to Folger & Cropanzano [14], organizational justice is the methods used for making decisions concerning distribution of organizational sources and the set of social norms and rules regulating the relations between people when these methods are applied.

In the related literature, the concept of organizational justice is often described as a variable with three sub-dimensions: distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice [12, 15]. Distributive justice is the perception pertaining to whether employees’ gains like responsibilities, services, opportunities, awards, statuses are in proportion to their performance [14, 16]. Procedural justice is defined in relation with employees’ perception of the methods used in the distribution of awards in the organization [17]. According to Bies (1986, cited in Skarlicki & Folger [18]), interactional justice, which is the third sub-dimension, is the quality of the perception formed pertaining to inter-personal treatments towards the employees during the organizational activities. It involves
administrators’ value and respect towards the employees (e.g. listening to them attentively, having empathy with those who have difficulties) and acting with social sensitivity.

In the related literature, there are many studies on organizational justice. Some of them intend to determine the organizational justice perception at educational institutions [19, 20] and at enterprises [21, 22]. Some other studies analyzed the relation between organizational justice and influence tactics [23], cynicism [24], job satisfaction [25], value oriented school administration [26], organizational trust [6] and organizational citizenship [27] at educational institutions, while others researched enterprises, public and private sector, focusing on the relation among the variables of organizational trust [28], job satisfaction [29], organizational commitment [29] and organizational citizenship [30]. Kilic & Demirtas [20] conducted research at high school; Cirak & Baskan [19] at primary school and observed that teachers’ perception of organizational justice is at a high level. The abundance of studies conducted in educational institutions, enterprises or other public institutions points to the importance of the organizational justice concept and its potential for educational research.

1.2. Identification

One of the first definitions of identification belongs to Tolman [31]: “an individual’s commitment to an organization with a sense of belonging”. The social identity theory also became a focus of research in the literature related to organizational behavior after 1980’s [32]. As a response to this development, certain changes occurred in the definition of identification. Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail [33] defined the term as “an individual’s identifying himself or herself with the main identity features of the organization”. Although the initial research on organizational identification concluded that one’s identification with the organization is solely a result of cognitive process, it was later accepted that organizational identification comprises cognitive, affective and behavioral elements [34]. Social identity theory, one of the theories forming the foundation of organizational identification, is commonly believed to develop as a result of the group to which the individual belongs; thus, the individual-group relationship should be analyzed in this framework [35]. This sometimes has caused the interchangeable use of identification and social identity in the literature. However, for Tajfel [35], Ashforth & Mael [36], Benkoff [37], Scott, Corman & Cheney [38] and Dukerich, Golden & Shortell [39], identification is a different form of social identity. Identification with the organizations takes place when a person considers the organization as a part of his or her own identity. On the other hand, is a total of the answers given by a group to the questions “who are we?” or “what do we want to do?” [40]. If membership to the organization has gained a more important place than other social group memberships, it means this person has identified with the organization strongly [41].

The following are some examples of research topics about organizational identification in educational institutions: organizational cynicism [42], organizational support [5, 43], organizational communication [44].

1.3. The Relation between Organizational Justice and Organizational Identification

Two factors that influence employees’ behaviors and attitude at the workplace are organizational justice and organizational identification. Numerous studies have recently been conducted investigating the relation between the two factors. They generally have revealed that if employees have a high perception of organizational justice, organizational identification takes place far more easily [10, 11].

The relation between organizational justice and organizational identification has also been studied in Turkey, in educational institutions [9, 45-47], enterprises [48] and other organizations [8] and a significantly positive relation has been found between the variables of organizational justice and organizational identification. The present study intends to analyze the relation between organizational justice and organizational identification by seeking answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent do secondary and high school teachers perceive organizational justice and organizational identification?
2. How do teachers’ perception of organizational justice and organizational identification differ according to school types?
3. How do teachers’ perception of organizational justice and organizational identification differ according to their seniority at school?
4. To what extent does organizational justice predict the organizational identification behavior?

2. Methodology

This is a quantitative study (descriptive survey). The data was collected by Organizational Justice Scale and Organizational Identification Scale.

2.1. Study Group

The study group consists of 1223 teachers working at Ministry of National Education secondary and high schools during the 2015-2016 academic year in 14 county towns (Altieylul, Karesi, Ayvalik, Balya, Bandirma, Burhaniye, Dursunbey, Edremit, Gomec, Havran, Ivrindi, Kepsut, Sindirgi, Susurluk) of Balikesir in Turkey.

2.2. Data Collection Instruments

“Organizational Justice Scale” developed by Niehoff &
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Moorman [49] and adapted to Turkish by Polat & Celep [27] was used to evaluate secondary and high school teachers’ perception of justice at their schools. It is a three dimensional scale with 19 items.

In addition to the validity and reliability analyses, explanatory factor analysis was performed, which revealed that the version of the scale as adapted by Polat & Celep [27] is a three dimensional scale. The KMO values of the scale were found to be .97 and the Barlett value was found to be p<0.00. The three dimension of the scale explains 73% of the total variance. Factor loadings of the nine procedural justice related items are reported as varying between .51 and .77 and factor loadings of the four interactional justice related items are reported as varying between .69 and .77. Six distributive justice related items are reported as varying between .53 and .76.

The KMO values of the scale were found to be .97 and the Barlett value was found to be p<0.00. The single dimension of the scale explains 47% of the total variance. Factor loadings of the eleven items are reported as varying between .49 and .77. Scale is a single dimensional scale with the response option ranging from (1) “Strongly Disagree” to (5) “Strongly Agree”.

2.3. Data Analysis

The equivalences of arithmetic mean scores of Organizational Justice Scale and Identification Scale in the graded scale were calculated by the 4/5 formula. Thus, the arithmetic averages of 1.00-1.80 were considered to be very low; 1.81-2.60 were considered low; 2.61-3.40 medium; 3.41-4.20 high and 4.21-5.00 very high.

3. Findings

3.1. Findings in Relation to first Sub-Problem

Table 1 presents the levels of organizational justice and identification at schools as perceived by secondary and high school teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-dimensions</th>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>Sd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Secondary sch</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High sch</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive Justice</td>
<td>Secondary sch</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High sch</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural Justice</td>
<td>Secondary sch</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High sch</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional Justice</td>
<td>Secondary sch</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High sch</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Total</td>
<td>Secondary sch</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High sch</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 1, the organizational identification mean score of secondary school teachers is 3.93 (sd=.74) and that of high school teachers is 3.88 (sd=.72), which falls in the “high” band.

Secondary school teachers’ distributive justice mean score is distributive justice mean score is (\( \bar{X} \)=3.98, sd=.82), and high school teachers’ (\( \bar{X} \)=3.83, sd=.81). Secondary school teachers’ procedural justice mean score is (\( \bar{X} \)=3.91, sd=.88), while high school teachers’ is (\( \bar{X} \)=3.74, sd=.89).

The findings demonstrate that secondary and high school teachers’ perception of distributive and procedural justice is at “high” level. Secondary school teachers’ interactional justice mean score (\( \bar{X} \)=4.25, sd=.73) falls in the “very high” band, whereas high school teachers’ (\( \bar{X} \)=4.12, sd=.76) falls in the “high” band. Organizational justice perception levels of secondary school teachers (\( \bar{X} \)=4.00, sd=.78) and high school teachers (\( \bar{X} \)=3.85, sd=.78) are “high”.

Explanatory factor analysis was re-performed in this study, which confirmed that the scale is single dimension as in the original form. The KMO values of the scale were found to be .90 and the Barlett value was found to be p<0.00. The single dimension of the scale explains 47% of the total variance. Factor loadings of the eleven items are reported as varying between .49 and .77. Scale is a single dimensional scale with the response option ranging from (1) “Strongly Disagree” to (5) “Strongly Agree”.

Another tool used in the study is “Organizational Identification Scale” -has a single dimension and 11 items- adapted to Turkish by Loga (2003, cited in Argon & Ekinci [42]).
Findings in Relation to Second Sub-Problem

Table 2 presents t-test results regarding organizational justice and identification perceptions of teachers in accordance with school types.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-dimensions</th>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>( \bar{x} )</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedural Justice</td>
<td>Secondary sch</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>3.165</td>
<td>.002**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High sch</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive Justice</td>
<td>Secondary sch</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>3.197</td>
<td>.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High sch</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional Justice</td>
<td>Secondary sch</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>2.730</td>
<td>.006**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High sch</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Secondary sch</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>1.026</td>
<td>.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High sch</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01

As it can be seen in Table 2, teachers’ perceptions of organizational justice differ significantly at secondary schools and high schools. Secondary school teachers associate significantly greater levels of justice at their workplaces than high school teachers as to procedural justice (secondary school: \( \bar{x} = 3.91 \); high school: \( \bar{x} = 3.74 \)), distributive justice (secondary school: \( \bar{x} = 3.98 \); high school: \( \bar{x} = 3.83 \)) and interactional justice (secondary school: \( \bar{x} = 4.25 \); high school: \( \bar{x} = 4.42 \)) sub-dimensions. As regards organizational identification, no significant difference exists between high school and secondary school teachers.

Findings in Relation to Third Sub-Problem

Table 3 presents variance analysis of organizational justice and identification perceptions of teachers according to seniority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-dimensions</th>
<th>Seniority</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>( \bar{x} )</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Scheffe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distributive Justice</td>
<td>(1) 1-10 years</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>9.247</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>1-2;1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) 11-20 years</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) 21+ years</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural Justice</td>
<td>(1) 1-10 years</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>8.270</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>1-2;1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) 11-20 years</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) 21+ years</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional Justice</td>
<td>(1) 1-10 years</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>6.723</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>.001**</td>
<td>1-2;1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) 11-20 years</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) 21+ years</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>(1) 1-10 years</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>1.349</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>.260</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) 11-20 years</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) 21+ years</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01

As can be seen in Table 3, high school teachers with different levels of seniority perceive significantly different levels of organizational justice. This difference exists between seniority groups for each band (1-2; 1-3). No significant difference exists between high school teachers’ perceptions of organizational identification according to professional experience.

There is no significant difference between organizational justice perceptions of secondary school teachers in different seniority groups. Similarly, as to organizational identification, neither the secondary school nor high school teachers differ significantly according to seniority groups.
Findings in Relation to Fourth Sub-Problem

Table 4 presents the results of multiple regression analysis for prediction of organizational identification.

As can be seen in Table 4, organizational justice explains 14% of the total variance in organizational identification ($R^2=.138$, $p=.000$). According to standardized regression coefficients, the predictive variables are in the following order of effect: procedural justice ($β=.193$), interactional justice ($β=.154$), and distributive justice ($β=.051$). The significance tests of regression coefficients showed that procedural justice and interactional justice (p<.01) are each significant predictors of identification (p<.01).

The correlation between predictive variables and identification was analyzed, and it was found that identification correlates with distributive justice with a correlation coefficient of $r=.320$ (provided all other variables are kept constant; $r=.032$), with procedural justice with a correlation coefficient of $r=.357$ (provided all other variables are kept constant; $r=.105$), and with interactional justice with a correlation coefficient of $r=.344$ (provided all other variables are kept constant; $r=.097$). According to the results of regression analysis, the following equation predicts identification:

Identification can be expressed as $2.501 + (.046 \times \text{distributive justice}) + (.159 \times \text{procedural justice}) + (.149 \times \text{interactional justice})$.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis of the correlation between secondary and high school teachers’ organizational justice perceptions and organizational identification has demonstrated that secondary school teachers perceive organizational justice at “very high” level as for interactional justice, and at “high” level as for distributive justice and procedural justice sub-dimensions. High school teachers have “high” levels of perception as to procedural justice, interactional justice, and distributive justice. Overall, secondary and high school teachers seem to have identified with their schools to a “high” extent. These findings of the study are in concordance with those of other studies in the related literature [5, 50, 51].

The study has revealed that secondary and high school teachers have significantly different perceptions in distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice sub-dimensions. Secondary school teachers associate justice with their organizations more than high school teachers do. This situation is often linked with a set of factors: students who are admitted to high schools based on Entrance to High School Exam scores and their parents have great expectations from school; high school teachers lack confidence in school administrators about several issues such as the arrangement of class schedules, teachers’ assignment to elective and weekend courses, and designation of place and time of school guard duties.

There are studies in the related literature confirming this finding of the present study about perception of organizational justice. Alkis & Gungormez [51] asserted that organizational justice perception significantly differ according to school types, in particular between teachers of elementary childhood education and primary school education. Unlu, Hamedoglu & Yaman [52] maintained that primary and secondary school teachers have higher perceptions of organizational justice than high school teachers. Similarly, Altinkurt & Yilmaz [26] observed that perception of organizational justice varies according to school type.

As regards occupational seniority, high school teachers in different seniority groups differ from each other significantly in perception of organizational justice. Teachers with 1-10 years of seniority have more positive perception of organizational justice than those with 11-20 years and those with more than 21 years of experience. Indeed, senior teachers might have problems with school administrators as their length of work at an organization increases and the problems they have experienced over time and want to forget might adversely influence their perception of justice. Thus, it can also be claimed that teachers with 1-10 years of experience are less experienced in the profession, which may affect their perception of organizational justice. This is in agreement with the findings of some studies in the related literature. Yilmaz [7] pointed out that secondary school teachers’ perceptions differ by seniority and teachers with 6-10 years of seniority have more negative perceptions. Cirak [53] concluded that primary school teachers’ perception of organizational justice is affected by the occupational seniority variable. Celebi, Vuranok & Asan [54] concluded in their research that as seniority increases so does teachers’ perception of organizational justice. Cirak & Baskan [19]’s study revealed that teachers with 1-5 years of
experience tend to associate lesser degree of justice with school administrators. Kilic & Demirtas [20], similarly, concluded that teachers with 16-20 years of experience have more positive perception than those with 1-5 and 6-10 years of seniority. Nevertheless, there are also studies in the related literature that do not link organizational justice perception to varying seniority [26, 55-58]. Thus, it is not as yet possible to claim that there is a consensus in the literature as to the effect of professional seniority on teachers’ perception of organizational justice. As for secondary school teachers, no significant difference exists between organizational justice perceptions of different seniority groups. As for both secondary and high school teachers, similarly, no significant difference exists between organizational identification perceptions of different seniority groups.

This study has demonstrated that organizational justice is a predictor of organizational identification attitude, which is in agreement with the studies that exist in the related literature [8-11]. It has also been shown that the higher the perception of justice is, the higher the identification level. A major finding of the study is that all sub-dimensions of organizational justice predict the organizational identification behavior, procedural justice being the strongest predictor.

Another significant predictor of organizational identification is interactional justice. Distributive justice, however, has an effect on organizational identification to a lesser extent. The findings of the present study are in concordance with those in the related literature. Gulluce & Kahyaoglu [59], for example, found that all three sub-dimensions of organizational justice correlate with organizational identification behavior. Furthermore, other studies pointed to that procedural justice [60], interactional justice [61] and distributive justice [62] significantly predict organizational identification.

The present study intends to shed light onto the relation between organizational justice and organizational identification. A more confident generalization can be made by carrying out studies with a larger sample, i.e. primary schools and higher education institutions could be included and the study could be extended to different geographical regions.

Further research is needed focusing on other variables which are potentially influential on teachers’ justice and identification perception such as leadership styles, organizational citizenship, organizational trust, ethical values, job satisfaction, performance and evaluating all these variables that interact with each other as a whole. Similarly, to obtain in-depth data on the subject, further studies can be performed including the intermediary factors in the organizational justice and organizational identification relation.

Although the tools used in the study are accepted to be valid and reliable, there might be some limitations to the study such as the extent to which the participants were objective in their responses to the items in the scales, their hesitancy about expressing negative opinions concerning the school, current psychological state, emotions, and attitude. All in all, further and more extensive studies should be conducted using qualitative and quantitative research methods together to eliminate the limitations caused by the cross sectional data.

REFERENCES


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