THE EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: EVIDENCE FROM THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

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The main purpose of this study is to examine the effects of perceived organizational support on organizational commitment. In this research, organizational commitment was examined in terms of affective commitment, normative commitment and continuous commitment. The research was conducted with 150 employees through face to face interviews in a five star hotel operating in Antalya region. The relationship between the variables was analysed by using correlation and regression analysis. Besides this, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Exposing the relationship between perceived organizational support and the dimensions of organizational commitment, it was determined the effect of perceived organizational support on organizational commitment. The findings indicated that perceived organizational support had a significant positive effect on affective, normative and continuous commitment. Implications and suggestions were presented for hotel managers who want to keep and encourage their employees to work in the hotel industry.

Key Words: Perceived Organizational Support, Organizational Commitment, Hotel, Turkey.

Introduction

In today's global business environment, employees are viewed as one of the most important assets for most organizations, in particular service-based organizations, because of the benefits of delivering successful performances (Evans et al., 2003: 71). The tourism industry is a labour-intensive service industry, dependent for survival (and at best, competitive advantage) on the availability of good quality personnel to deliver, operate, and manage the tourist product (Amoah and Baum, 1997: 5).

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)contains that in order to meet socio emotionalneeds and to assess the benefits of increased work effort, employeesfromthe general perception concerning the extent to which the organizationvalues their contributions and cares about their well-being. Such perceived organizational support would increase employees' felt obligation to help the organization reach its objectives, their commitment to the organization, and their expectation that improved performance would be rewarded (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson and Sowa, 1986; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Shore and Shore, 1995).

For employees, the organization serves as an important source of socio-emotional resources, such as respect and caring, and tangible benefits, such as wages and medical benefits. When organizations recognize their employees, they would help them to meet their needs for approval, esteem, and affiliation (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson and Sowa, 1986). Service-oriented

organizations such as airlines and hotels recognize that employee satisfaction will go a long way toward contributing to their goal of having happy customers (Robbins and Judge, 2009: 123).

Employees may interpret the support from their employer as a demonstration of commitment towards them (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Shore and Shore, 1995) which in turn tend to enhance their commitment to the organization. Relationships between POS and organizational commitment are corroborated by many studies (e.g. Eisenberger et al., 1990; Guzzoet al., 1994; Hutchison, 1997; Hutchison and Garstka, 1996; Jones et al., 1995; Rhoades et al., 2001; Settoon et al., 1996; Shore and Tetrick, 1991; Shore and Wayne, 1993). However, the strength of these relationships varies from one study to another (see the meta-analysis of Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

From this perspective, this study aims to assess, on the one hand, the effects of perceived organizational support on the dimensions of organizational commitment.

Literature Review

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support defined as people's global beliefs about the extent to which the organization cares about their well-being and values their contributions (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson and Sowa, 1986: 501).

According to Eisenberger et al., (1990: 52) employees may use perceived organizational support to judge the potential gain of material and symbolic benefits that would result from activities favored by the organization. The relationship between perceived support and effort-reward expectancies may be bidirectional. Expected reward for high effort could strengthen and, in turn, be influenced by employees' perception that the organization valued their contributions.

Organizational Commitment

The organizational commitment concept has been defined as the relative strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in a particular organization. *Organizational commitment* focuses on employees' commitment to the organization. Organizational commitment is characterized by (a) "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (Mowday et al., 1982: 27).

Meyer & Allen (1991) developed a framework that wasdesigned to measure three different dimensions of organizational commitment: (a) *Affective Commitment* refers to employees' emotional attachment, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Employees with a strong affective commitment stay with the organization because they *want to*. (b) *Continuous Commitment* refers to employees' assessment of whether the costs of leaving the organization are greater than the costs of staying. Employees who perceive that the costs of leaving the organization are greater than the costs of staying remain because they *need to*. (c) *Normative Commitment* refers to employees' feelings of obligation to the organization. Employees with high levels of normative commitment stay with the organization because they *ought to*.

Perceived Organizational Support and Organizational Commitment

Perceived organizational support develops by meeting employees' socioemotional needs and showing readiness to reward employees' extra efforts and to give help that would be needed by employees to do their jobs better (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson and Sowa, 1986).

POS has been considered a key factor of organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Currie and Dollery (2006) found that POS was significant relationship with affective commitment and normative commitment. However in this study, POS hadn't significant relationship with continuous commitment (Currie and Dollery, 2006). A meta-analysis conducted by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) shows that POS is strongly and positively correlated with affective commitment. Onyinyi (2003) investigated the relationship between POS and organizational commitment among health workers and found a weak but significant relationship between the two variables.

According to Eisenbergeret al. (1986: 501), perceived organizational support would be influenced by various aspects of an employee's treatment by the organization and would, in turn, influence the employee's interpretation of organizational motives underlying that treatment. This implies that there will be agreement in the degree of support that the employee would expect of the organization in a wide variety of situations. These would include the organization's likely reaction to the employee's future illnesses, mistakes and superior performance and the organization's desire to pay a fair salary and make the employee's job meaningful and interesting. Perceives support would raise an employee's expectancy that the organization would reward greater effort toward meeting organizational goals.

The relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment is mostly explained by reciprocity and social exchange. From the social exchange theory perspective, Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, and Sowa (1986) suggested that beliefs underlie employees' inferences concerning their organizations' commitment to them in turn contribute to the employees' commitment to their organizations. High perceived organizational support generate an obligation for employees. Employees feel an obligation that they not only ought to be committed to their organizations, but also feel an obligation to return the organizations' commitment by showing behaviors that support organizational goals.

While some studies reveal the relationship between organizational support and organizational commitment ((Buchanan, 1974; Yoon and Thye, 2002), some studies reveal the relationship between perceived organizational support and the dimensions of organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 1990; Randall et al., 1999; O'Driscoll and Randall, 1999; Aube et al., 2007).

Research Hypotheses

Perceived Organizational Support and Organizational Commitment

Perceived organizationalsupport increases affective commitment by contributing to the satisfaction of theemployees' socio emotional needs (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, and Sowa, 1986; Fuller, Barnett, Hester and Relyea, 2003). This satisfaction will serve to enhance employees' socialidentity by being a member of that organization which creates greater affective commitment. Thus, our firs hypothesis is as follows:

H1: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment.

The relationship between normative commitment and perceived organizational support can be explained by the norm of reciprocity. There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and normative commitment. When the employee perceives that their employer's support, the employee will feel to commit to their organization and this feeling includes normative commitment as well (Aube et al., 2007). Our second hypothesis is as follows:

H2: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and normative commitment.

Specifically, the results of the meta-analysis conducted by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002: 109) reveal that: POS and affective commitment had a strong, positive relationship, whereas POS and continuous commitment had a small, negative relationship. The effect sizes for both constructs were heterogeneous, even after removal of outliers. Nevertheless, the POS affective commitment associations were positive in all individual studies. POS-continuance commitment relationships were more variable, ranging from near zero to large and negative. On the other hand, some studies found that perceived organizational support positively affects continuous commitment (Özdevecioğlu, 2003). Our third hypothesis is as follows:

H3: There is a positive relationship between organizational support and continuous commitment.

Methodology

Data Collection

Sample consisted of 150 employees working in a five star hotel in Antalya. In order to collect data from the hotel, a questionnaire survey was carried out. Questionnaires were distributed by researcher. A brief oral information was given to the respondents about the procedure and confidentiality of the study. For each participant the procedure took approximately 15 minutes.

The Methods of Analysis

At the end of gathering data descriptive statistics, which include frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations and correlations among the main variables, are used to present the main characteristics of the sample. To test the study hypotheses, linear regression analysis was performed to assess the effects of perceived organizational support on dimensions of organizational commitment.

Questionnaire Design and Scales

The questionnaire used for this study consists of three parts. The first part includes demographic information about the participants. The second part consists of short form of Perceived Organizational Support scale developed by (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, and Sowa, 1986). The scale consists of 8 items and is measured on a 6 point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The third part consists of Organizational Commitment scale. Organizational commitment is measured by Organizational Commitment Scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1991).

Organizational commitment has three dimensions and each dimension is measured by six items on a 6 point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Items were standardized in Turkish by Wasti (2000). She found Cronbach-alpha reliability score as .93. The Cronbach-alpha Reliability score of the original scale was .94 (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

Results

Reliability Analyses

Cronbach-Alpha scores of scales and subscales are shown in Table 1. Scales internal consistencies are ranged from .73 to .90. All of the alpha scores for scales and subscales are found higher than .70.According to Robinson et al. (1991), if the reliability coefficient (Alpha) of the scale is above .70.the alpha value of the factor is acceptable.

Table 1. Reliability Coefficients of Scales and Subscales.

Scale	Cronbach Alpha
Organizational Commitment	.90
Affective Commitment	.91
Continuous Commitment	.76
Normative Commitment	.80
Perceived Organizational Support	.73

Profile of the Participants

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Participants are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Participants.

Gender	n	%
Male	89	59,3
Female	61	40,7
Total	150	100,0
Marital Status	148	3,77
Married	66	44,0
Single	84	56,0
Total	150	100,0
Age	144	2,09
Less than 18	13	8,7
18-25	56	37,3
26-33	36	24,0
34-41	31	20,7
42-49	14	9,3
Total	150	100,0
Education		

Primary school	21	14,0
Secondary school	13	8,7
High school	60	40,0
Associate degree	34	22,7
University	22	14,7
Total	150	100,0
Operating Time		
Less than 1 year	54	36,0
1-5 years	65	43,3
6-10 years	21	14,0
11-15 years	7	4,7
16 years and over	3	2,0
Total	150	100,0
Operating Status on Tourism		
Less than 1 year	16	10,7
1-5 years	73	48,7
6-10 years	26	17,3
11-15 years	25	16,7
16 years and over	10	6,7
Total	150	100,0
Department		
Front office	10	6,7
Food and beverage	66	44,0
Housekeeping service	41	27,3
Accounting	2	1,3
Human resource	4	2,7
Other	27	18,0
Total	150	100,0
Operating Condition		
Continuous cadre	37	24,7
Provisional cadre	113	75,3
Total	150	100,0
Monthly Income Distribution		
Less than 1000 TL	111	74,0
1000-1499 TL	32	21,3
1500-1999 TL	2	1,3
2000-2499 TL	2	1,3
2500-2999 TL	1	,7
3000 and over	2	1,3
Total	150	100,0

Male employee represented 59.3%. Most of the respondents (56.0%) were single and (37.3%) were between the age of 18-25. Most of the respondents (40.0%) had a high school education. 43.3% of the respondents work in the organization between 1-5 years. Most of the respondents (48.7%) work in the tourism sector since 1-5 years. Forty four percent of respondents worked in the food and beverage department, 6.7% worked in the front Office, 27.3% worked in the housekeeping service, 1.3% worked in the accounting and 2.7% worked in

the human resource department. Most of the respondents (75.3%) have a provisional cadre and most of the respondents have less than 1000 TL per month.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation matrix in Table 3 displays correlation coefficients between theindependent and dependent variables.The table also indicates means (M) and standard deviation (S.D.) values of variables. The results of the correlation matrix show that the dimensions of the dependent variables and independent variable were positively correlated to each other (see Table 3).

Table 3. Correlation Matrix.

Scales and Subscales	Mean	St.Dev	1	2	3	4
1 Perceived Organizational Support	3.61	.58		.662**	.286**	.379**
2 Affective Commitment	3.84	.96			.502**	.445**
3 Continuous Commitment	3.21	.98				.551**
4 Normative Commitment	3.69	.86				

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level(2tailed).

Findings showed that perceived organizational support was highly correlated with Affective (r = 0.60) and Continuous (r = 0.55) commitment. And a significant correlation was determined between perceived organizational support and Normative (r = 0.37) commitment.

Hypothesis Results

A total of third hypotheses were tested by using linear regression analysis. The results of hypotheses are as follow:

H1: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment.

Table 4. Linear Regression Analysis.

Dependent Variable	β	t	p
Affective Commitment	.662	9.746	0.000*
R= .662 R²= .438			

*p<0.01

Hypothesis 1 suggested that there is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment. It was found that 43.8% of affective commitment is explained by perceived organizational support. Perceived organizational support positively affects affective commitment (β: .662; p<0.01). Hypothesis 1, therefore, was supported.

H2: There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and normative commitment.

Table 5. Linear Regression Analysis.

Dependent Variable	β	t	p
Normative Commitment	.379	4.578	0.000*
R= .379 R^2= .144			

*p<0.01

The second hypothesis suggested that there is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and normative commitment. It was found that 14.4% of normative commitment is explained by perceived organizational support. Perceived organizational support positively affects normative commitment (β: .379; p<0.01). Thus, hypothesis 2 was supported.

H3: There is a positive relationship between organizational support and continuous commitment.

Table 6. Linear Regression Analysis.

Dependent Variable	β	t	p
Continuous Commitment	.288	3.279	0.001*
R= .286 R^2= .082			

*p<0.01

The third hypothesis suggested that there is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and continuous commitment. It was found that just 08.2% of continuous commitment is explained by perceived organizational support. It is not high percentage but there is a positive relationship. Perceived organizational support positively affects continuous commitment (β: .288; p<0.01). Thus, hypothesis 3 was supported.

Conclusions

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of perceived organizational support on organizational commitment. The relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment was examined by correlation analysis and three hypotheses were examined by regression analyses.

As a result of the analysis, it was found that perceived organizational support has a significantly positive effect on affective commitment. If employees receive support or if they perceive this support, they will feel more attached to the organization. This result is consistent with previous studies (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Randall et al., 1999, Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

Employees who feel the support of their organization will feel morally obligated to keep working for that organization, according to this study, perceived organizational support has a significant effect on normative commitment. This effect is not strong as affective commitment but it was found significant relationship between these variables. This relationship is consistent with some studies (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky, 2002; Aube et al., 2007).

The results reveal that perceived organizational support has a significant effect on continuous commitment. Contrary to previous studies (Shore and Tetrick, 1991; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002), it was found that perceived organizational support has a positive effect on continuous commitment. O'Driscoll and Randall (1999) explain that employees feel continuous commitment because of the lack of job alternatives.

Besides, three hypotheses concerning the relationshipbetween perceived organizational support and affective, normative and continuous commitment are supported. As it was expected, POS is strongly associated with affective, normative and continuous commitment.

Consequently, if employees feel support from their organization, they will feel commitment for their organization. In this sense, leaders and managers have an important role. They can influence positively the employees by giving support and vision. They can make feel to employees that they are important for the organization.

Managerial Implications

Leaders of the hotel industry should check the decisions taken whether these decisions support the employees or not. In this context, they should develop human resources policies which support the employees. Organizational policies and procedures that provide the development of self-esteem in a healthyway will be very useful both for the organization and the individual. Hotel managers should have the mission to improve their employees' self-esteem in order to contribute to the achievement of organizational goals.

Some factors can influence the motivation of the employee. For the hotel industry, stressful job conditions, seasonal jobs, unsatisfactory promotions, low pay, behavior of managers, poor physical working conditions (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000). Therefore, hospitality industry should find some solutions for working conditions and especially for seasonal jobs. Besides, manager's behaviors are also important for the satisfaction of the employee. The employees will feel that organization care about them when managers or supervisors listen them and behave in a friendly way.

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