Environmental Conditions of the City in which Teachers Serve and their Organizational Commitment Perception Levels

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ABSTRACT This paper aimed to reveal how environmental conditions influence organizational commitment. The study group consisted of teachers who serve in central Sirnak city. The paper is a mixed model and it utilized the descriptive survey model, which is a quantitative research method, for measuring the organizational commitment level of teachers, and descriptive analysis, as a qualitative study method, for finding out the influence of environmental factors. It was concluded based on the results obtained from the paper that the organizational commitment levels of teachers were low. It can be said that the reason for this situation is that almost all of the teachers serving in the city of Pirnak are reappointed away from this region before they complete their fifth year. As for the reasons why teachers do not stay in the region for more than five years, it was found that safety of life is their main concern.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the cyclic movement in today’s world, either big or small, each structure tries to develop various methods for survival. While considering these structures as organizations, they react almost like a living organism. Each organism wants to grow and become stronger to survive. In order to understand how organizations structure themselves, it should be known that how they operate, their components, parts, and the function performed by each unit (Mintzberg 2014). It is known that organizational perceptions of employees, who are the most important building block of organizations, have a significant influence on organizational growth and strengthening. The expectation of an organization from its employees, therefore, is that they sustain the organization. Sustaining an organization is associated with such concepts like job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Apparently it was Whyte (1956) who first tried to explain the concept of organizational commitment as one of the most influential subjects for ensuring organizational development. Subsequently, researchers like Mowday (1979), O’Reilly and Chatman (1986) and Allen and Meyer (1990) added dimensions to this concept. The classifications of organizational commitment by Allen and Meyer (1990) were also used in many studies carried out in Turkey. Organizational commitment is defined as a biased and effective commitment of an individual to the goals and values of his organization. Beyond an instrumental value, this commitment means that the individual plays his role simply for the welfare of the organization based on its goals and values. Committed employees strongly believe in the goals and values of their organization and voluntarily comply with its instructions and expectations (Balay 2000). That is, the concept of organizational commitment refers to the extent of identification and integration an individual feels for his organization (Saglam 2003).

In recent years, increasing efforts have continued in attempts to identify and resolve the blocks that prevent enhancement of the effectiveness of schools and thus of teachers (Korkmaz 2011). Organizational commitment concept have been studied many times in Turkey (Buluç 2009; Balay 2000; Celep 2000; Durna and Eren 2005; Korkmaz 2007; Korkmaz 2011; Terzi and Kurt 2005; Yildirim 2006) and other countries (Hoy et al. 1990; Hoy and Clover 1986; Anderson 1982; Mathews and Shepherd 2002; Nguni et al. 2006; Lunenburg and Ornstein 2013). Such studies show that where organizational commitment is high, employees have higher and more effective participation in their organizations and decisions. It is certainly not a coincidence that a decrease in organizational commitment is shown among the reasons for failure to use human resources efficiently in the current system. Many researchers (Hoy et al. 1990; Brady 1988; Hoy and Miskel 2010) state that a high correlation exists between organizational commitment and school efficiency. A positive correlation exists between organizational commitment and the total period of time spent in an
organization. In other words, as one’s duration of employment increases in an organization, his organizational commitment also increases (Çöl and Gül 2005). However, data from the Turkish Ministry of National Education show that a teacher’s average time period of staying in Sirnak is below two years.

Schools’ structure are types of social and open system organizations that affected by environmental expectations (Lunenburg and Ornstein 2013). Open system model acknowledges not only that organizations are influenced by their environments but also that they depend on these influences (Hoy and Miskel 2010). In a general sense, environment can be described as everything that exists outside an organization and is influenced by the organization. The environment of an organization includes the three dimensions of capacity, volatility and complexity. Capacity shows the degree to which an environment can support growth. Volatility explains the degree of instability in the environment. Complexity is defined as the degree of heterogeneity and concentration among environmental elements (Robbins and Judge 2013).

The stronger the environment is, the stronger its influence on an organization will be. In this context, the existing teacher circulation in the city of Sirnak show how environmental conditions and opportunities are influential on this process. According to the Ministry of Education data about teacher circulation, the number of teachers appointed to Sirnak was 1145 while the number of teachers who left the city by reappointment was 1140 in the same year. The numbers were 2500 and 1750 respectively, in 2014 and as of September 2015, the number of teachers appointed to the city was 1300 while the number of those teachers who demanded to be reappointed out of the city was 2230.

Objectives

This paper aims to identify the level of organizational commitment as perceived by the teachers, who are the most important building blocks of the school system, and to show the similarities between these perceptions and the opinions of the teachers regarding environmental factors. It is aimed based on the data to be obtained as a result of the paper to show what kind of influence environmental factors have on teacher behaviors and on their organizational commitment. For this purpose, the paper seeks answers to the following questions:

- What is the general level of organizational commitment of teachers?
- Do the organizational commitment levels of teachers show a significant difference compared with independent variables such as branch, marital status, sex, city of origin, type of school, and duration of service in Sirnak?
- What are the opinions of teachers regarding environmental conditions in which they work?
- How do the environmental conditions that teachers work in influence their organizational commitment?

METHODOLOGY

The mixed method was used in the paper. The descriptive survey method was used quantitatively while the descriptive analysis model was utilized qualitatively. The study group was created so as to provide maximum diversity. For this purpose, teachers serving in primary schools, secondary schools and high schools located in the city center of Sirnak were included in the paper. Perceptions of 356 teachers in qualitative terms and opinions of 50 teachers in quantitative terms were included. Descriptive characteristics of the sample is presented at Table 1.

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<th>Table 1: Descriptive characteristics of the sample</th>
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Source (Esef Hakan Toytok)
The data collection tools utilized and the data analyses applied in the paper included a 5-point Likert type organizational commitment scale consisting of 19 items, which was adapted and developed by Boylu et al. (2007) and has been used in many studies. The scale involves three factors but general average values were taken as the paper aimed to reveal the general perception of teachers. For the total reliability coefficient of the scale, Boylu et al. found the Cronbach Alpha value as $\alpha = .85$. It was found as a result of a reliability analysis carried out by the researcher that the Cronbach Alpha value across the scale was $\alpha = .89$. In the paper, the t-test analysis was used for binary variables and the one-way ANOVA analysis was applied for variables above two and the statistical significance was identified as $P < .05$. For significant differences, the Scheffe test from Post Hoc analyses was applied and interpreted.

A semi-structured 12-question interview was used for collecting data relating to environmental factors. The question pool of this interview form was initially formed of 18 questions as a result of a literature review and discussions and then the number of questions was reduced to 12 after the form was pre-applied to five teachers, the results analyzed and an expert opinion taken. The application of the form was carried out by face-to-face interviews with teachers. The obtained data was interpreted by descriptive analysis as a qualitative research method. Number codes like 1, 2, 3… were used instead of the actual names of the teachers who participated in the study.

**RESULTS**

The data obtained for the variables of branch, marital status, sex and city of origin, which were taken as binary independent variables in the paper, was subjected to a t-test analysis, and the findings obtained are shown in Table 2.

According to the findings in Table 2, a significant difference for $P \leq .05$ exists in the independent variables of branch, marital status and city of origin while no significant difference was found for $P \leq .05$ in the independent variable of sex. When the significant difference in the variable of branch was analyzed, it was seen that this significant difference was in favor of branch teachers ($X = 3.19$). This value shows that the perceptions of classroom teachers and branch teachers are within the range of “I agree partially.” It can be said that the reason for this is the fact that classroom teachers want to take their students from the first grade to the fourth to graduate them, and that compared with branch teachers, it is more difficult for classroom teachers to be appointed to another city. When the significant difference in the variable of marital status is examined, it is seen that this difference was in favor of single teachers ($X = 3.19$). These values showed that the perceptions of single and married teachers are within the range of “I agree partially.” It can be said that the reason for single teachers to show a higher level of organizational commitment is their spending more time with students than married teachers. The independent variables of city of origin were taken as being either from Sirnak or from another city, and a significant difference was found. When this significant difference was examined, it was found to be in favor of the teachers from Sirnak ($X = 3.30$). These values represent that the perceptions of the teachers from Sirnak and from other cities are within the range of “I agree partially.” It can be said that the reason for the significant difference with the teachers from Sirnak is because these teachers have more responsibility for staying in the city because of their family and relative relationships.

The data obtained for the variables of school type and service period in Sirnak, which involved more than two variables, was subjected to the one-way ANOVA analysis and the findings obtained are shown in Table 3.

According to the findings shown in Table 3, a significant difference for $P \leq .05$ exists for the independent variable of school type while no significant difference for $P \leq .05$ is found for the
independent variable of the service period in the city of Sirnak. While trying to identify the reason for the significant difference in the variable of school type, the results of the Scheffe test as a Post Hoc analysis showed that the difference was between the primary school teachers and the secondary school teachers, and that this significant difference was in favor of the primary school teachers (X= 3.15). The arithmetical average scores of the secondary school teachers remained in the level of X= 2.87. As for the opinion range value equivalents of these arithmetical averages, the primary school and secondary school teachers correspond to the “I agree partially” range. As for the reason for the significant difference relating to the independent variable of school type, it can be said that it is because secondary school implementation has begun recently in our country and that therefore, secondary school teachers remain at lower levels in terms of organizational commitment compared with the teachers serving in other school types.

The answers and the percentages of 12 questions that form the qualitative part of the paper with the teacher opinions relating to these questions are listed as following:

Item 1: “Do you experience any problems in your communication with students and student guardians in your social and professional life? Can you elaborate on it?” 54 percent (N=27) of the participant said yes and 46 percent (N=23) said no for this item. When they were asked to elaborate on such problems, they explained that they are often caused by the fact that they do not speak Kurdish, which is the dominant and mother tongue of the region and that on the other hand, student guardians do not speak Turkish well.

Item 2: “Do you think that the values of “irnak and your personal values are similar in vital terms?” a great majority (60%, N=60) of the participants said yes and 40 percent (N=20) said no. A significant number of the teachers said that they experience conflict as their personal values do not go well with the environmental values.

Item 3: “When you, as an employee, consider the work conditions in the city of irnak and compare it with other cities, what do you think about it?” 18 percent (N=9) said they find the working conditions in Sirnak favorable while 74 percent (N=37) said they find the conditions of the city below the level of other cities or unfavorable because of the economic, political and geographical factors of the region.

Item 4: Regarding the question, “Do you think that the political environment makes a positive or negative influence on the educational process?” 82 percent (N=41) said “Yes”, and that this influence is negative.

Item 5: As regards the question, “Are you concerned about incidents of violence and protests occurring in irnak? How does this situation influence your motivation?” 82 percent (N=41) of the teachers said they are concerned about such incidents and that their motivation is adversely influenced by them.

Item 6: For the question, “How do such events influence your classroom management and educational applications in terms of discipline and accomplishment?” 60 percent (N=30) of the teachers said such events do not influence their classroom order and management while 40 percent (N=20) of them responded otherwise.

Item 7: About the question, “How are you influenced by the fact that military and police vehicles frequently show up in the city?” 60 percent (N=30) of the teachers said they are not influenced while others were observed to hesitate about answering the question.

Item 8: As for the first part of the question, “Do you experience any security problem? And do you plan a reappointment due to this situation?” 62 percent (N=31) clearly said they experience no problem about it while 38 percent (N=19) said they experience problems of security. For the second part of the question, 62 percent of the teachers (N=31) said they do not plan a reappointment because of this situation while 42 percent of them (N=21) answered otherwise.

Item 9: Regarding the first part of the question; “Do you think that there are sufficient so-
cial, sporting and cultural activities in "ıranak? Does this situation influence your desire for re-appointment?" almost all of the teachers answered that they find the social, sporting and cultural activities in the city insufficient. As for the second part, 50 percent of the teachers (N=25) considered this as a justification for reappointment while the other part did not.

Item 10: In connection with the question, “Do you think there are suitable conditions for teachers to develop themselves in artistic, academic, etc. terms? And does this situation influence your desire for reappointment?”, 100 percent (N=50) of the teachers said they believe that such conditions do not exist. For the second part of the question, 40 percent of them (N=20) did not state an opinion, 34 percent of them (N=17) said this influences their desire for reappointment, while 26 percent (N=13) said it did not.

Item 11: For the question, “Do you think that the physical infrastructure (electricity, Internet, water, etc.), transportation and health conditions are sufficient? And does this situation influence your desire for reappointment?”, almost all of the teachers (98%, N=49) said the conditions were insufficient and 52 percent of them (N=26) said regarding the second part of the question that they consider this is a justification for a reappointment.

Item 12: In connection with the question, “What can you offer as a solution to these problems?”, a great majority of the teachers did not share any ideas. Those who did explained that mainly the educational level and economic structure need to be improved, that the influence of the political structure and security problems should be alleviated, and that the infrastructural problems should be solved.

**DISCUSSION**

According to results obtained in the survey, environmental conditions and levels of organizational dependence of teachers working in the center of ıranak Province were determined. Therefore, first of all, levels of organizational commitment of teachers were examined according to independent variables such as branch, marital status, sex, hometown, school type and service duration. While significant differences were found in independent variables of branch, marital status, hometown and school type, no significant difference was met in other independent variables. While looking into the reasons for the significant difference, it was determined that the independent variable of branch originates from the fact that teachers other than primary school teachers show lower levels of organizational commitment towards their schools. It is predicted that branch teachers can be appointed from the region in a shorter time than primary school teachers. In the marital status independent variable, it was determined that organizational commitment levels of those married are lower when compared to singles. It may be said that the reason for this originates from the fact that the ages of single teachers are lower than married teachers and they present more idealistic behavior in the occupation. While looking into the origin of significant difference in the hometown independent variable, because teachers from ıranak mostly regard environmental events as normal and they are used to the culture of the region, it may be said that they show a higher degree of perception when compared to teachers from other provinces. In addition, the reason why teachers from ıranak mostly regard environmental events as normal and they are used to the culture of the region, it may be said that they show a higher degree of perception when compared to teachers from other provinces. In addition, the reason why teachers from ıranak mostly regard environmental events as normal and they are used to the culture of the region, it may be said that they show a higher degree of perception when compared to teachers from other provinces. In addition, the reason why teachers from ıranak mostly regard environmental events as normal and they are used to the culture of the region, it may be said that they show a higher degree of perception when compared to teachers from other provinces. In addition, the reason why teachers from ıranak mostly regard environmental events as normal and they are used to the culture of the region, it may be said that they show a higher degree of perception when compared to teachers from other provinces. In addition, the reason why teachers from ıranak mostly regard environmental events as normal and they are used to the culture of the region, it may be said that they show a higher degree of perception when compared to teachers from other provinces. In addition, the reason why teachers from ıranak mostly regard environmental events as normal and they are used to the culture of the region, it may be said that they show a higher degree of perception when compared to teachers from other provinces.
want to leave. This condition causes the teachers not to regard themselves as parts of their schools. Recent terrorist incidents, which have increased in the region, act as a catalyst that accelerates this appointment mobility and teacher circulation. The number of students appointed from İrınak province in 2014 was 1750 but the number of students requesting appointment from İrınak province as of September 2015 was 2230. This is an important indicator especially since, as of 2015, the effect of the increasing terrorist incidents in the region of İrınak have caused the number of those leaving the province to almost double over the previous year.

Tella et al. (2007), Güleryüz et al. (2008), and David et al. (2000) find similar results with this paper in terms of significant differences and relations between organizational commitment and job satisfaction. In consideration with earlier researchers who concluded a relationship between organizational commitment and organizational performance (Pinho et al. 2014), organizational culture (Lok and Crawford 2004; Erdem 2007), organizational citizenship (Gürbüz 2006), organizational justice (Titrek 2009) and leadership styles of managers (Terzi and Kurt 2005), it may be concluded that all of these variables affect organizational commitment. However, it is seen in the survey that as a determiner on the organization and employees, the environmental factors come before these variables. Organizational commitment is an organizational behavior type, it is affected directly by the school, which is a functional environment and by environmental elements outside the school, which is a societal environment and it is shaped by these foundations. It is known that in order for the organizational commitment to be able to form in a place, it is necessary for the employee to work there for no shorter than a certain period. Research predicts that the period may be between three and five years. However, when it is remembered that the average period a teacher stays in İrınak Province is less than two years, it is not expected for an organizational commitment level to form with the standard intended for the organization here. A primary school student sees about three teacher changes on average during primary school education period (four year). Unless the primary reason(s) why teachers generally want to stay here less than two years are removed, it is thought that this condition will continue in its existing state and that schools will not be effective in achieving the quality and success standard intended. Current central exam results justify that the quality of the education in İrınak schools is in below average. Environmental uncertainties and conflicts directly affect the structure and operation of schools negatively and accordingly the effectiveness and productivity of schools decrease. This seems to be an expected result. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that environmental variables are very effective in the quality and success of schools today. Research shows that in Turkey, organizational structure of institutions is stronger in western cities than eastern cities (Titrek 2009) and if institutions are stronger, they are more capable of coping with environmental factors (Mintzberg 2014). It should be remembered when considering environmental conditions that workers function as a dominant factor that is directly effective on organizational commitment levels.

CONCLUSION

According to the quantitative results of this research, organizational commitment perception levels of the teachers that are working in the city center of İrınak are significantly different from the independent variables of branch, marital status, hometown and school type. However, there is no significant difference observed on the independent variables of sex and service duration. Due to the qualitative results of this research, teachers state that environmental conditions like physical, political, security, health and educational situations of İrınak city do not satisfy their expectations. Because of these reasons, teachers want to be appointed from İrınak city to other cities. This situation results with undevelopment organizational commitment level in high level

RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementers may be given training on the necessity of positive environmental conditions for organizational commitment being increased and bureaucrats and politicians directing education policies should be encouraged to invoke regulations able to keep teachers longer in these regions.

Based on the results, it can be suggested that researchers may repeat effects of environmental factors by associating other organizational variables apart from organizational commitment
and may compare the survey by repeating the same survey in other provinces in the South-East Anatolia Region.

NOTE

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