AN INVESTIGATION ON PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS IN TERMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE

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ABSTRACT: One of the basic elements in the existence of organizations is the concept of justice. It is very important for employees to perceive their workplace as fair in terms of power struggles. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the impact of individuals' perceptions of organizational politics on organizational justice. The sample of the study consists of lecturers working at a vocational high school in Istanbul. Data were obtained by means of survey method and factor analysis, Pearson correlation analysis and gradual regression analysis were carried out after reliability analysis. The result of the study indicates that employee's organizational policy perception has a significant negative impact on organizational justice.

Key Words: Organizational Politics, Perceptions of Organizational Politics, Organizational Justice

ÖRGÜTSEL POLİTİKA ALGISININ ÖRGÜTSEL ADALET AÇISINDAN İNCELENMESİ

ÖZET: Örgütlerin varlığını sürdürebilmesindeki temel unsurlardan biri adalet kavramıdır. Dolayısıyla çalışanların örgütlerindeki güç mücadelelerini adil olarak algılayıp algılamamaları oldukça önemli olmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu araştırma bireylerin örgütsel politika algılarının örgütsel adalet üzerindeki etkisini incelenmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın örneklemini İstanbul'da bulunan bir vakıf üniversitesine bağlı meslek yüksekokulunda çalışan öğretim görevlileri oluşturmaktadır. Anket yöntemiyle veriler elde edilmiş ve güvenilirlik analizlerinin ardından faktör analizi, pearson korelasyon analizi ve kademeli regresyon analizi yapılarak öğretim görevlilerinin çalıştıkları kuruma yönelik algıladıkları örgütsel politikanın, örgütsel adalet üzerindeki etkisi ölçülmeye çalışılmıştır. Sonuç olarak örgütsel politika algısının örgütsel adaletle negatif yönlü güçlü bir ilişkisi olduğu görülmüş ve örgütsel politika algısının üç boyutunun bu ilişkiyi belirlediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational politics is one of the important concepts that has been involved in research on organizational behavior for nearly 40 years. Although there exist many different definitions related to the subject, Burns (1961) is the first who describe the concept by focusing the competition and struggle among employees in order to reach scarce resources. The main reason for these struggles is the desire of individuals to acquire power or to preserve their existing power. Thus, organizational environments turn into arenas, where political struggles are experienced, individuals compete each other directly and indirectly or demonstrate power struggles and tactics of influence. In this respect, it would not be wrong to say that every organization is a political structure (Zaleznik, 1999: 54).

Organizational politics is used as a tactical power to control organizational resources (Bacharach, 2006) in order to support the personal interests of individuals (Ferris and Kacmar, 1992: 94). Individuals use organizational politics to gain power and influence through various methods. While some of these employees' influence tactics are perceived positively by some organization staff, the others may perceive it negatively. These semantic differences occur entirely due to the subjective perceptions of the employees and shapes the source of the organizational behavior. The effect of the sense of justice is extremely important in the formation of the concept of perception, which is expressed as the effort of the individuals to give meaning to the environment in which they exist. When individuals perceive the environment as fair, they develop positive attitudes towards the organization but on the contrary when they perceive the practices of the organization far from justice and perceive the organization as a political structure where only the expectations of the individuals who have power is realized, they may intend to leave the organization (Cropanzano et al., 1997: 165). In this respect, the aim of this study is to examine the influence of organizational politics perceptions of the individuals on the perceptions of organizational justice and thus contribute to organizational behavior literature.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Perceptions Of Organizational Politics

Perception is the process by which individuals gather and organize the information they obtain from the environment with the help of various senses (sight, hearing, sniffing, touching and tasting) and understand or interpret them for themselves. The employees of the organization bring the information gathered for the organization into a meaningful way with the influence of their personalities, cultures and experiences, and then use them as a basic element of their behavior (Eren, 2006: 69). Indeed, perception is the reality created by individuals and thus reality may differ according to the various perceptions of each individual. The organizational environments garner the individuals with different cultures and expectations which can be the source of different perceptions. The issue that needs to be considered here is whether influence

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tactics within the organization are perceived politically by organizational employees rather than as having political elements or not. Because if behaviors related to influence are perceived politically by other organization employees, even if there are no behaviors that serve the personal interests of the individual exhibiting this behavior, the reactions of the employees will be shaped according to the situation they perceive. In other words, even if the behavior is not political, the individual may give it a political meaning and may respond according to this perception. The response of each individual to each situation may differ since each situation have a potential to be perceived differently by each individual. As a result, the different perceptions of employees relating the behavior of the executives, colleagues or the organizational rules shape the behaviour and attitude of the employees. The positive or negative perceptions may affect the expectations of individuals and also their job performance at all.

In general, organizational politic is perceived negatively by organizational employees. Individuals employed in organizations with strong political perceptions search the paths outside the formal rules in reaching organizational success since they are suspicious about reaching their organizational expectations by working hard. Employees performing in such an organizational environment may experience a feeling of tension, increased stress and burnout (Chang et al., 2009: 782; Ferris et al., 1989: 88; Vigoda, 2001).

Ferris et al. (1989) determined that the individuals who have negative perceived organizational politics may develop three types of behavior. They may leave the organization or if they decide to stay, they try two different options; not be involved in organizational policies or being involved in political behaviors. In general, the commitment levels of individuals increase when they choose to stay, focus on their work and avoid political behaviors. On the other hand, the job satisfaction levels of individuals decrease while an increase in the level of work-related anxiety is determined when they involve in the political behaviors (Ferris et al., 1989: 88).

The literature review revealed that perceived organizational politics were found to be negatively related to the desired organizatioanl results such as organizational commitment (Drory 1993; Cropanzano et al.,1997; Randall vd., 1999; Vigoda 2000a, 2000b), organizational citizenship behavior (Vigoda 2000a, 2000b; Nathani & Mathur, 2013; Randall vd 1999) and job satisfaction (Valle & Perrewe 2000; Randall et al. 1999; Cropanzano et al.1997).

1.2. Organizational Justice

Greenberg (1990) described organizational justice as a concept associated with the justice that employees perceive in their work situation. Cropanzano et al. (2007) draws attention to the ethical and moral behaviors of managers and expresses organizational justice as the way employees evaluate these behaviors (Cropanzano et al., 2007: 35). Furthermore, Greenberg and Baron (2008) characterize employees' perceptions of organizational justice via wages that are indicators of success, the recognition of the high performance, complete information sharing and the behaviours of managers that leads to be proud of being member of that organization (Greenberg & Baron, 2008: 43). Therefore, organizational justice perceptions are very critical in the formation of feelings, attitudes and behaviors of employees towards their organizations.

The past studies examined the organizational justice using three dimensions including distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice.

Distributive justice: Distributive justice is the perceptions of justice about the benefits of employees such as rewards, wages and promotion (Folder & Konovsky, 1989: 115). Feelings such as anger, unhappiness or guilt (Weiss et al., 1999: 788); cognitive activities such as the wrong evaluation of the contribution provided by him/her or other employees and also the achieved results (Adams, 1965: 270) are among the most common responds if the employee does not perceive this distribution as fair. All of these perceptions leads to behaviors such as intentionally decreasing performance or the amount of the work done (Charash & Spector 2001: 301). In this respect, distributional justice has a motivational characteristic and also a cognitive feature.

Procedural justice: Scholars described procedural justice as the perceptions of fairness of organizational procedures by which outcomes are distributed or decisions are made (Aryee et al., 2004, Jiang, 2012; Lind & Tyler 1988). It is apparent that the employees not only question the gains they achieve but also the fairness of the processes used in allocating rewards should be considered to be reliable, transparent, ethical, free of bias, accurate, correctable and without deception (Folger & Greenberg, 1985: 148; Kickul et al., 2005: 210; Triana et al., 2012: 214).

Interactional justice: Interactional justice focuses on the nature of the behaviors among employees. This dimension consists of two different elements. The first is interpersonal justice, which is expressed as the level of respectful behaviors of managers towards employees' while distributing organizational achievements and also implementing organizational procedures (Colquitt, 2001: 388). The second element is defined as the perception of the employees as to the extent to which organizational information is conveyed in a fair manner (Goodarzi et al., 2011: 43).

1.3. The Relationship Between Perception Of Organizational Politics And Organizational Justice

The concept of organizational justice focuses on the decisions of the organizational managers in order to ensure that the gains arising from the organizational activities are distributed fairly among the employees of the organization. In this respect, it can be said that the employees who work in an organizational environment where the organizational gains are distributed fairly and the rules are applied to all employees in the same way may probably have positive perceptions of justice (Black & Porter 2000: 122). The employees who work in such organizations try to minimize the political activities and their efforts will be in such a way that contribute the positive perceptions of organizational justice at all. This indicates how employees perceptions of organizational politics are closely related to their perceptions of justice. Ferris and Kacmar (1992) stated that the increase in employees perceptions of organizational politics reduces their perceptions that the organizational activities are fair. In other words as Yurtsever (2000) expresses, if the individual believes that there is no justice in the organization, s/he perceived the organization as political which in turn increases the possibility of the political behaviour

presentation of the individual. Ertekin and Ertekin (2003) also argue that the employees who perceive the activities of the organization in a political manner that is away from justice, will also apply to political methods.

Cropanzano et al. (1997) stated that the high perceptions of organizational politics will be the ground of the negative perceptions of organizational justice. For instance, Andrew and Kacmar (2001) found a moderate correlation among sub-dimensions of organizational justice, including procedural justice and distribution justice, and perceived organizational politics of employees. Ayhan and Gürbüz (2014) also found a moderate relationship among perceived organizational politics and procedural justice and interaction justice. The study of Ayhan (2013) also confirmed the significant relationship between organizational justice and perceived organizational politics. In the same study, the strongest relationship was examined between perceived organizational politics and procedural justice. Finally, Işcan's (2005) study with 456 employees led to conclusion that there is a negative relationship between organizational politics and justice in such a way that an increase in employees' perception of organizational politics will reduce their perceptions of organizational justice.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Universe and Sample

The aim of this research is to determine the influence of perceived organizational politics on organizational justice perceptions of lecturers. In this direction, 170 lecturers working in the Vocational High School which is connected to a foundation university in Istanbul are the universe of the study. 156 of the sample group were reached and the questionnaire forms were distributed and 147 of them were collected in the following days. As a result 9 questionnaire forms were excluded and 138 questionnaires were included in the analysis. In this direction, it can be said that 81.17% of the sample represents the universe.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

The survey method was used to collect the data to be used in the research. The first part of the questionnaire includes questions about demographic variables and in the second part statements relating to perceived organizational politics and organizational justice are presented.

2.3. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The frequency and percentage values of the demographic characteristics of the lecturers participating in the research are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants

Variables	Groups	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)	Variables	Groups	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)

Category	Value	Count	%	Category	Value	Count	%
Gender	Woman	75	54,3	Education	License	28	20,3
	Male	63	45,7		Master's Degree	96	69,6
	Total	138	100		Doctorate	14	10,1
Marital status	Single	90	65,2		Total	138	100
	Married	48	34,8	Income rate	1405-2500 tl	2	1,4
	Total	138	100		2501-3500 tl	115	83,3
Age	25 age and under	4	2,9		3501-4500 tl	19	13,8
	26-35 age	115	83,3		4501 and above	2	1,4
	36-45 age	14	10,1		Total	138	100
	46-55 age	3	2,2	Job experience	Less than 1 year	21	15,2
	56 age and older	2	1,4		1-3 years	46	33,3
	Total	138	100		4-6 years	49	35,5
					7-9 years	17	12,3
					10 years and above	5	3,6
					Total	138	100

2.4. Perceived Organizational Politics Scale

The variables for organizational politics were measured by the widely accepted and preferred Perceived Organizational Politics Scale developed by Ferris and Kacmar (1992). Participants were asked questions about 31 expressions in 5-point Likert scale. The answers given to these questions have been tried to be evaluated with the help of exploratory factor analysis using SPSS 20 program. As a result of the Barlett test ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), there was a correlation between the variables included in the factor analysis and the KMO value obtained during the test was found to be sufficient for factor analysis (KMO = 0.811 > 0.60). Varimax method was selected and the factors were analyzed under 5 factors. The statements of factor 3,5,9,13,17,19,25,27,30 affecting the factor load of less than 0,44 and adversely affecting the internal consistency were excluded from the scale. The factors obtained are named as Keeping Interests in the Foreground, Doing what it takes to get stronger, Behavior of Colleagues, Superior Behavior, Organizational Politics and Applications.

As a result of the reliability analysis, Cronbach's Alpha value of the perceived organizational politics scale consisting of 22 statements was calculated as 0,932. The factor structure of the

perceived Organizational Politics scale, and the reliability and explanatory values of each factor are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Factor analysis table for perceived organizational politics

Dimensions	Matter	Factor Load	Reliability of Factor
Keeping Interests in the Foreground	POP 21	,799	,921
	POP 22	,756	
	POP 7	,731	
	POP 20	,719	
	POP 12	,674	
	POP 4	,659	
	POP 10	,655	
	POP 1	,626	
	POP 11	,607	
Doing what it takes to get stronger	POP 18	,814	,782
	POP 2	,727	
	POP 16	,502	
	POP 23	,441	
Behavior of Colleagues	POP 26	,687	,711
	POP 29	,599	
	POP 15	,584	
	POP 8	,576	
Superior Behavior	POP 14	,829	,737
	POP 28	,760	
Organizational Politics and Applications	POP 31	,766	,737
	POP 24	,682	
	POP 6	,602	

2.5. Organizational Justice Scale

The variables for organizational justice is measured by the "Organizational Justice Scale" developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) that include 20 items. The answers given to these questions have been tried to be evaluated with the help of exploratory factor analysis using SPSS 20 program. As a result of the Barlett test ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), it was found that there was a correlation between the variables included in the factor analysis and the KMO obtained in the test result was sufficient for factor analysis (KMO = $0.895 > 0.60$). Factor analysis was performed by selecting the Varimax method and the variables were collected under 3 factors.

As a result of the reliability analysis, Cronbach's Alpha value of the organizational justice scale consisting of 20 statements was calculated as ,961. Factor structure of organizational justice scale, reliability and explanatory values of each factor are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Factor analysis table for organizational justice

Dimensions	Matter	Factor Load	Reliability of Factor
Distributional	OJ 1	,784	,908
	OJ 2	,729	
	OJ 3	,869	
	OJ 4	,746	
	OJ 5	,780	
	OJ 6	,700	
Procedural	OJ 7	,618	,901
	OJ 8	,586	
	OJ 9	,727	
	OJ 10	,668	
	OJ 11	,844	
Interactive	OJ 12	,749	,965
	OJ 13	,724	
	OJ 14	,818	
	OJ 15	,847	
	OJ 16	,827	
	OJ 17	,727	

	OJ 18	,790		
	OJ 19	,850		
	OJ 20	,851		

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 4 shows the means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients for the research variables. As can be seen, there is a significant negative correlation between perceived organizational politics and organizational justice (r = - ,815). The highest relationship between the perceived organizational politics and the sub-dimensions of organizational justice is seen as one of the interactional dimension of keeping interests in the foreground (r = -, 834). Perceptions of organizational politics of the lecturers were found to be at medium level (X = 3.05) and organizational justice levels were at the intermediate level (X = 2.86).

Table 4: Average, standard deviation and correlations between variables

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Keeping Int. in the Foreground	1									
2	Doing what it takes to get stronger	,667**	1								
3	Behavior of Colleagues	,594**	,536**	1							
4	Superior Behavior	,478**	,484**	,501**	1						
5	Organizational Politics and Applications	,527**	,572**	,494**	,314**	1					
6	Distributional	-,593**	-,588**	-,342**	-,328**	-,433**	1				

No	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7	Procedural	-,712**	-,617**	-,499**	-,457**	-,739**	,551**	1			
8	Interactive	-,834**	-,665**	-,564**	-,358**	-,528**	,610**	,783**	1		
9	Perceived Organizational Politics General	,922**	,820**	,768**	,631**	,701**	-,612**	-,780**	-,815**	1	
10	Organizational Justice General	-,829**	-,714**	-,545**	-,422**	-,623**	,808**	,866**	,941**	-,844**	1
Mean		3,15	3,02	2,94	2,55	3,27	2,53	2,73	3,15	3,05	2,86
St. Deviation		0,96	0,90	0,87	1,12	0,97	1,05	1,00	1,07	0,77	0,92

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

3.2. Hierarchical Regression Analysis For The Relationship Between Perceived Organizational Politics And Organizational Justice

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between Organizational Politics Perception of employees and organizational justice. Table 5 shows the results for hierarchical regression analysis.

Table 5: Hierarchical regression analysis

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3			
		St Beta	p	R²	Adj .R²	St Beta	p	R²	Adj .R²	St Beta	p	R²	Adj. R²
Distributional	KIITF	-,593	,000	,351	,346	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	KIITF & DWITTGS	-	-	-	-	-,362	,000 ,000	,418	,409	-	-	-	-

					-,346								
Interactive	KIITF	-,834	,000	,695	,693	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	KIITF & DWITTGS	-	-	-	-	-703 -193	,000 ,002	,716	,712	-	-	-	-
Procedural	OPAA	-,739	,000	,545	,542	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	OPAA & KIITF	-	-	-	-	-,503 -,447	,000 ,000	,690	,685	-	-	-	-
	OPAA, KIITF & SB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-,493 -,399 -,111	,000 ,000 ,042	,699	,692
Justice General	KIITF	-,829	,000	,687	,685	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	KIITF & OPAA	-	-	-	-	-,693 -,257	,000 ,000	,735	,731	-	-	-	-

	KIITF, OPAA & DWITTGS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-,585 -,192 -,214	,000 ,000 ,001	,757	,752

As shown in Table 5, there is a negative relationship among the dimensions of organizational politics such as to take advantage of the ''Keeping Inteests in the Foreground'' and "Doing what it takes to get stronger" and the dimensions of organizational justice including distributional and interactional justice. There found no significant relationship among the dimensions of organizational politics such as behaviors of colleagues, superior behaviors, organizational politics and distributional and interactional justice. Therefore these dimensions were excluded from regression analysis. In addition, the results show a negative relationship among the dimensions of organizational politics such as "to keep the interests in the forefront", "superior behavior", "organizational policies" and "procedural justice". There found no significant relationship among "To Doing what it takes to get stronger", "behavior of colleagues" and "procedural justice" and thus they were excluded from the analysis. To sum up, the results indicate that there exists a negative relationship among the dimensions of organizational politics such as "Keeping Interests in the Foreground", "Doing what it takes to get stronger", "organizational policies and practices" and "organisational justice ".

4. RESULT

Creating a business environment where all employees perceive the practices as fair is one of the most fundamental challenges facing businesses today and differences among employees such as personality, culture and expectations make it difficult to carry out this struggle effectively. Because employees with different values can develop different perspectives on what is happening in the organization, making it almost impossible for all employees to have the same perceptions of organizational policies and practices.

In this study, the effect of perceived organizational politics on organizational justice of 138 lecturers working in a vocational college of a foundation university in Istanbul is examined. According to the correlation analysis conducted in this direction, there is a strong negative relationship between the organizational policy perceptions of the instructors and organizational justice. The most important dimension of the organizational policy perception that determines this relationship is obtained as a result of the hierarchical regression analysis which is ''Keeping Interests in the Foreground''.

All of these findings indicate that the organizational policy process, defined as social impact efforts for those who have the power to provide rewards to protect interests, employees are perceived as negative and as a result weakened perception of justice.

Organizational justice is generally based on the principle of equality of organizational practices and it is related to the objective implementation of the policies determined by the behaviors, aims and values of the organization employees and managers in the organization. The way in which these policies are perceived is also influential in the formation of positive or negative attitudes towards the organizations. Considering the relationship between organizational justice and organizational outcomes such as performance, efficiency, organizational citizenship behavior and job satisfaction, the importance of the organizational politics concept is better understood. For that reason, in order to strengthen the perceptions of the employees about the justice of their organizations, managers should be fair in parallel with the principle of equality.

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