



Shaping of Organizational Identification by Organizational Commitment: Example of Private Education Institutions in Malatya and Tunceli

Arzu ÇAKINBERK
Tunceli University
acakinberk@tunceli.edu.tr

Neslihan DERİN
İnönü University
nderin@inonu.edu.tr

Erkan T. DEMİREL
Fırat University
edemirel@firat.edu.tr

Introduction

The increase recorded in the number of national and international mergers, purchases, strategic alliances and visual organizations in the globalization process has created a rapidly changing organizational environment. Relationships between organizations and their employees have gained gradual importance in such an environment. Today, organizations expect their employees to work steadily for a long time for the organization, to feel committed and loyal to the organization and even to link their personal identity with that of the organization.

When individuals adopt behaviours of the organizations they work for and feel themselves committed to the organization, there exists identification. Identification satisfies individuals, as it is attractive in some ways. However, it is clear that this attraction can suddenly disappear; it can only be preserved when the individual feels her/himself committed to her/his organization. The stronger the commitment, the higher the identification (Balay, 2000:100). Sense of belonging -in other words commitment-functions as a predecessor of identification and helps an individual to actualize her/himself (Benkhoff, 1997: 114-131). Organizational identification is the personal perspective of the individual -who is committed to the organization as a member of it-about her/his membership. In other words, sense of belonging to an organization results in ownership of the successes and failures of the organization. Thus, organizational commitment can be suggested to be one of the predecessors of organizational identification (O'Reilly, 1986:492-499).

In light of the above suggestions, this study examined how the concept of organizational identification is shaped by organizational commitment, one of its predecessors. From this perspective, the problem statement of the study was defined as "Is organizational commitment a determiner of organizational identification?" and the main hypothesis as "organizational commitment is a strong determiner of organizational identification".

The aim of the study was to emphasize the importance of organizational identification and commitment in business life and to raise awareness of this issue among teachers and school administrators, who play a leading role in education of future generations. Moreover, this study aimed to reveal whether the organizational identification and commitment levels of teachers differed according to demographic variables and to suggest ways to improve the relationship, if any, between these two factors. The Turkish literature clearly addresses the subjects of identification and commitment. However, there are insufficient studies addressing “determiner” relationships between these two concepts and studies suggesting them to be different from each other. The present study therefore contributes to expanding the existing literature on this theme.

Material and Method

Following questions were address to solve the study problem and to test the main hypothesis:

1. What are the organizational identification levels of participants?
2. What are the organizational commitment levels of participants?
3. Are the organizational identification perceptions and organizational commitment of participants related?
4. Do the identification perceptions of participants differ according to their demographic characteristics?
5. Do the organizational commitments of participants differ according to their demographic characteristics?

The study population comprised 232 teachers and administrators employed in private education institutions operating in the Malatya and Tunceli Provinces of Turkey. The study sample consists of the 135 teacher and administrator. A questionnaire method was adopted to collect data.

The questionnaire form was comprised of three parts. The first part included 5 items of demographic data (age, sex, educational background, marital status, tenure).

In the second part, the final version of Cheney’s (1982) organizational identification scale (composed of 22 items) was used to determine the organizational identification levels of participants.

In the third part of the questionnaire, the “Organizational Commitment Scale” developed by Meyer and Allen (1991, 1993) was used to determine the organizational commitment levels of participants. The scale includes 17 items to measure three types of organizational commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

The scale was developed as a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly Disagree, ... 5=Strongly Agree). Arithmetic means of the study findings were calculated and the following intervals were considered in interpretation of mean values:

- | | |
|--|----------|
| $1.00 \leq \text{arithmetic mean} \leq 1.80$ | : Low |
| $1.80 < \text{arithmetic mean} \leq 3.40$ | : Medium |
| $3.40 < \text{arithmetic mean} \leq 5.00$ | : High |

A “single sample t-test” was used to determine if the mean values were different from test value (3.40) “Correlation” and “multiple regressions” analyses were used to determine whether identification was shaped by commitment. An “independent samples t-test” and “One-Way ANOVA” were used to examine whether identification and commitment values differed according to demographic characteristics.

The “Organizational Identification Scale” was analyzed via exploratory factor analysis to test the validity of the study. At the end of the factor analyses, 4 items were excluded from the scale. Thus, the final scale comprised 3 factors, which explained 66.40% of the total variance. The reliability coefficient of the scale (α) was calculated to be 0.815, indicating that the scale was highly reliable; KMO test result was 0.894%.

The “Organizational Commitment” scale, the other scale used in the study, was also subjected to factor analysis to test the validity of the study. At the end of the factor analysis, 3 items were excluded from the scale. The final scale comprised 3 factors, which explained 64.54% of the total variance. Full compliance of these factors to the scale factor structure, clearly shown in the literature, can be suggested to be an indicator of consistency and explanatoriness of the scale. The reliability coefficient of the scale (α) was calculated to be 0.808, indicating a highly reliable scale; the KMO test result was 0.801%.

KMO test results showed that the results constituted a data set that was appropriate for factor analysis, and that they could create meaningful groups.

Findings

No concrete proof has been produced in the literature to demonstrate that “organizational identification” and “organizational commitment” mean either different or the same things.

The present study adopts the premise that identification and commitment are two different concepts. From this perspective, the main hypothesis (“Organizational commitment is a strong determiner of organizational identification”) was tested via correlation and regression analyses. According to correlation findings, organizational commitment represented 48.7% of organizational identification ($p < 0.01$). A statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) regression model ($r = 0.78$; $r^2 = 0.05$; adjusted $r^2 = 0.96$) was found between the dimensions of identification and commitment. Accordingly, three dimensions of commitment explained 59.6% of identification. These findings support the main hypothesis, that: “*organizational commitment is a strong determiner of organizational identification.*”.

Study participants were found to develop high levels of organizational identification. While their mean affective and normative commitment scores were at high levels, their mean scores of continuance commitment were at medium level.

The results of comparison between the identification findings of the present study and those within the literature are as follows:

The present study found no statistically significant difference in terms of sex, which conflicted with the literature. However, the study finding of “high-level identification among males” complied with the literature.

In compliance with the literature, the present study showed that identification was directly proportional to age. Unlike the literature, however, the present study found

no statistically significant difference in terms of marital status. Study results related to educational background complied with the literature. The present study also found direct link between tenure and identification, which complied with the literature.

The results of comparisons between commitment findings of the present study and those within the literature are as follows:

The present study found a statistically significant sex-based difference only in one dimension. Although this finding seems to conflict with the literature, this study showed that males scored higher in all dimensions, which complied with the literature. In the present study, no commitment dimension showed a statistically significant age-based difference, which conflicted with the literature. However, commitment was found to increase with an age-based increase in all dimensions of commitment, a finding parallel with the literature. No difference was found in marital status variable and singles showed higher levels of commitment behaviour, which conflicted with the literature. No difference was found according to educational background, which conflicted with the literature; the finding that “commitment was inversely proportional to educational background in all dimensions” complied with the literature. Unlike expectations, commitment did not differ according to tenure. The present study found a linear relationship between tenure and commitment, which complied with the literature.

Statistically significant differences, which were expected at the beginning of the study, were not found. This may have resulted from the structure of the scales used. The Reliability, explanatoriness and consistency of both the identification and commitment scales were quite high. Despite these high levels, it seems quite difficult to conclude that these scales are able to make planned measurements clearly. The confusion related to both concepts is also reflected in the scales (Reardon, 2003:20; Kuhn, 2002:34) and, these two scales (used to measure these two concepts) are suggested as not being completely independent from each other in practice (Reardon, 2003:20).

Conclusion and Suggestions

Suggestions developed in line with the study findings are as follows:

- Creation of a good organizational climate may be a first step towards organizational commitment and organizational identification. Creation of a good business environment may improve morale, motivation and efficiency of employees.
- The following steps should be taken to improve employee identification and commitment:
 - ✓ Provide employees with more control over their jobs.
 - ✓ Provide employees with the opportunity to do work that improves their skills.
 - ✓ Create an exciting working environment.
 - ✓ Provide required equipment.
 - ✓ Establish a fair reward and promotion system.
 - ✓ Ensure an open and sincere communication system within the organization.
 - ✓ Promote team spirit.

- ✓ Define a realizable and shared vision.
 - ✓ Approach individuals sensitively and manage differing points of view with respect.
 - ✓ Ensure employee participation in decision-making and development of work-related procedures.
 - ✓ Provide continuous and strong organizational support to employees.
- Organizations should implement policies that facilitate and improve identification. In the selection of the tools and methods most appropriate for developing identification and commitment, managers should be aware of the needs and motives of their employees (Smidts, 2010:3).
 - Organizational commitment studies in the field of education show that school success and student success affect the commitment level of teachers and administrators. Such studies emphasize that teachers and administrators are confined to low-level instrumental commitment elements and that psychological commitment elements are avoided (Balay, 2000:6). To improve the quality of the educational system and to increase student success, it is of great importance for educators to feel higher levels of commitment and identification. In this respect, instrumental elements (such as salary, promotion, leave, tools and materials, etc.) should be maximized and these elements should be accompanied by psychological components (such as attaching importance to people and human values; constructivist discipline; participatory administration; assistance in solution of personal problems; opportunities for development/improvement; security; creative activities, etc.) , in order to increase commitment among educators.

After the level of commitment is increased, the following steps should be taken:

- Confusion in the identification and commitment scales may result in unexpected results. For this reason, it is necessary to develop valid, reliable, consistent and explanatory commitment and identification scales that are completely independent and different from each other.
- Identification and commitment should not be isolated from the related culture. Thus, identification and commitment studies should be conducted in the light of cultural studies.
- Feelings of identification and commitment depend on the personalities of individuals. To add value to the related literature, studies should be made on the relationship between these two concepts and personal traits.
- It is obvious that the similarity between personal traits and organizational culture has positive effects on the power of identification and commitment. Future studies should take this balance into consideration.
- Identification and commitment levels of an individual should be measured both when s/he starts and stops working for the organization, in order to understand the reasons for any increase/decrease in the identification and commitment levels of the individual.

- Identification and commitment levels of both employees and employers/managers can be measured in one single institution or organization (such as a university) with the help of observation, detailed interviews and questionnaire methods. Such measurements then can be related to measurements of personal traits, organizational culture, job satisfaction etc.. Using such methods, it may be possible to obtain highly reliable and valid results.