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**SUPERVISOR ATTITUDES AS MEDIATOR ON EFFECT OF
ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS ON ORGANIZATIONAL
COMMITMENT**

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Abstract

A total of 220 people working for three separate İstanbul-based private transportation management organizations, which offer car rental services and sell automobiles with their 523 employees, took part in a questionnaire designed to investigate the mediatory role of supervisor attitudes in connection with the effect of organizational stress on organizational commitment as part of this study. IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0 Program was used in factor analysis, validity and reliability analysis, correlation analysis and in calculating scale means of the obtained data while IBM SPSS AMOS was benefitted from in structural equation modelling and in finding out about the mediatory role. The study has revealed that the organizational stress level felt by the employees taking part in the questionnaire is “moderate,” the level of supervisor attitude is “moderate” and their organizational commitment level is “low.” The data obtained at the end of the research has shown that supervisor attitude has a partial mediatory role on the effect of organizational stress on organizational commitment.

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Keywords: Organizational commitment, organizational stress, structural equation modelling.

1. Introduction

Organizations are social and financial systems that aim at increasing individual and social welfare by offering goods and services in return for profit. Although organizations use developed technological sources, they essentially rely on labor force. What employees do in an organization has an important function in their lives not only in economic terms but also psychologically. In order for organizations to become successful in the contemporary world, they must have professional groups of employees that work efficiently, productively and in harmony. Increasing the organizational commitment level of employees bears utmost significance for organizations so as to create such a work atmosphere.

It is thought that being aware of the factors that influence organizational commitment of employees and offering related solutions to the problems about this issue will positively affect the organizational commitment of employees in an organization.

Since organizational stress is regarded as one of the factors that is connected to organizational commitment according to the literature on organizational theory, this study explores the effect of organizational stress on organizational commitment and the regulatory role of supervisor attitude and behaviors on this effect.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Organizational Commitment

In organizational sciences literature organizational commitment is one of the most popular attitude. Organizational commitment antecedents, correlates and consequences have been studied for many years in management and organizational psychology. Especially in today's competitive marketplace organizational commitment is an intriguing topic (Zehir, Müceldili, & Zehir, 2012). A variety of definitions on organizational commitment exist in literature on organizational theory. Barutçugil defines organizational commitment (2004) as “accepting and believing in the purposes and the goals of an organization, being capable of making sacrifice for it, a strong will to continue to become a member of that organization and assuming the role of that organization and integrating it” (p. 47). For İbicioğlu (2000) and Demircan (2003), it is “the degree of integration an employee has with his or her organization and him or her being willing to continue to become an active member of it” (p. 16). Kirel says (1999) it is “a person's one-sided and effective attachment to the purposes and values of an organization” (p. 11).

In Allen and Meyer's three-component model of organizational commitment, there are three separate approaches. The first is “affective commitment,” the second is “continuance commitment” and the third is “normative commitment” and these three are said to be connected to each other.

Affective commitment is the component thanks to which employees are attached to organizations with strong ties. Concepts with strong (positive) connotations such as loyalty, voluntarism and participation are used to represent affective commitment. Continuance commitment depends on the determinants of the limited number of job alternatives and (employees') investments on organizations. In short, continuance commitment is an individual's need to stay at the organization. Normative commitment expresses the obligation felt by an employee to stay and work for an organization. Employees feel in debt to their organizations and work for them until they pay it (Özutku, 2008).

While Çöl (2004) says age, sex, education and marital status are among the personal factors that affect the level of organizational commitment, Bayram (2005) points out that the organizational factors influencing organizational commitment are work, the quality of the work, working hours, working conditions, wage, relationships with colleagues, management model, taking part in the decisions and performance evaluation. Yavuz (2008) argues employees might exhibit non-attendance to work, withdraw from some duties, show poor performance, feel job dissatisfaction or less encouraged, have a tendency to quit their jobs and might suffer from similar symptoms depending on the lowness of their organizational commitment. According to Zehir et al. (2012); There are positive relations between job satisfaction dimensions and affective commitment and continuance commitment.

2.2. Organizational Stress

It is possible to define organizational stress as a “reaction to adapt to the external conditions that result in physical, psychological and behavioral deviations in organization members” (Tınaz, 2005, p. 279).

Causes of organizational stress could be the structure and policies of an organization, organizational process and physical conditions (Başaran, 1992). Reasons of organizational stress related to organizational structure include evaluation and promotion (Baltaş, 2010), the nature and quality of a work (Balci, 2000) and taking part in the decisions in an organization (Barutçugil, 2002). Sources of stress about organizational policies could be listed as hierarchic relations (Gökdeniz, 2005), vaguely defined roles (Şimşek et al., 2001), responsibilities (Ertekin, 1993) and heavy workload (Şahin, 1994). Stress related to organizational process stems from inter-personal relationships (Başaran, 1992), discrepancies between individuals and their jobs (Şenyiğit, 2004), rivalry (Gümüştekin & Öztemiz, 2005), the fear of losing a job (Erdoğan, 1999), noise and the temperature of workplaces (Aydın, 2008) and use of light (Aytaç & Bayram 2000).

Stress is one of the most significant problems in today’s organizations where there is a strong rivalry (between employees), playing the most effective role in job satisfaction, performance, productivity, non-attendance and thoughts about quitting jobs (Tınaz, 2005).

2.3. Supervisors’ Attitudes and Influences on Employees

“People leave supervisors, not companies” is a concise saying (by Marcus Buckingham) which explains how much role supervisors have in employees’ decisions about quitting their jobs (Acar, 2016). Personification theory claims that employees have a tendency of personifying their organizations. The reason for this is the representative authority supervisors hold and the fact that their power of authority on the others is accorded to them by organizations (Rhoades, 2002). A study conducted by Demirtaş (2014) showed that supervisors’ support contributes positively to the affective commitment of employees. Ötken and Erben (2010), on the other hand, point out the significant effects of organizational and supervisor support on the attitudes and behaviors of workers, expressing its contributions to yielding positive results such as increase in employees’ performance. In the meantime, the attitudes of supervisors effects to organizational performance (Zehir, Şehitoğlu, & Erdoğan, 2012).

Data obtained from other researches demonstrated that there is a meaningful relationship between an employee's integration to an organization and identifying himself or herself with the work he or she does, and supervisor attitudes and behaviors have a mediatory role in this relationship. According to organizational support theory, employees who have positive relationships with their supervisors could adopt to their organizations much easier and their appreciation of organizational support becomes stronger (Eisenberger et al., 1990). Pekdemir et al. (2013) confirmed that there is a mediatory role of supervisor support in an employee's adjustment to an organization and in his or her adopting an open way of communication.

The hypotheses constructed on the basis of the literature findings about the effects of organizational commitment, organizational stress and supervisor attitudes and behaviors on employees are as follows:

H1. Supervisor attitudes effect the level of organizational commitment

H2. Organizational stress effect supervisor attitudes

H3. Organizational stress effect the level of organizational commitment

H4. Supervisor attitudes have a mediatory role on organizational stress' influence on organizational commitment.

3. Method

3.1. Purpose of the study

This study aims at investigating the effect of organizational stresses on organizational commitment in relation to the mediatory role of supervisor attitude and behaviors.

3.2. Paradigms and Data Collection

Data collected via conducting questionnaires with a total number of 220 employees of three İstanbul-based private transportation management organizations, which offer car rental services and sell cars with their 523 workers, is limited to these three organizations.

3.3. Analyses

IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0 was used for the explanatory factor analysis of the data obtained during the study while IBM SPSS AMOS was benefitted from in analyzing the effect and mediatory role (of supervisors). Statistical evaluation of data was done with numbers, percentages, means-averages and standard deviation. The data was evaluated, dividing the scale of size of 1 to 5 into five equal widths with "1.00 to 1.79" is said to be "very low," "1.80 to 2.59" "low," "2.6 to 3.39" "average," "3.40 to 4.19" "high" and "4.20 to 5.00" "very high." (http://www.istatistikanaliz.com/faktor_analizi.asp). The data was evaluated with 95 % confidence interval and significance level of 5%. The study model is analyzed according to the rules of Baron and Kenny's (1986) intermediary variable. In order for a variable to become a mediator variable, the conditions, as (also) noted by Baron and Kenny (1986), are;

(a) Independent variable must have an effect on mediator variable

(b) Independent variable must have an effect on dependent variable

(c) Mediator variable must have an effect on dependent variable and when it is included in a model, independent variable must lose its effect on dependent variable or there must be a decrease in its effect

(Necessary) steps were taken to determine the mediatory role explained by Baron and Kenny (1986) by applying structural equation modeling. Values about the goodness of fit related to structural equation modeling are shown in Table 01 below.

Table 01. Table for Index Reference Values (Meydan & Şeşen, 2011, p. 37)

Index	Normal Value	Acceptable Value
χ^2 "p" Value	$p > 0,05$	-
χ^2/sd	< 3	< 5
GFI	$> 0,90$	$> 0,89 - 0,85$
IFI	$> 0,90$	$> 0,89 - 0,85$
CFI	$> 0,97$	$> 0,95$
RMSEA	$< 0,05$	$< 0,08$
RMR	$< 0,05$	$< 0,08$

Following the structural equation modeling, a test developed by Sobel was used to determine mediatory role (Usta, 2009). Calculations for Sobel's test were done on the website "<http://quantpsy.org/sobel/sobel.htm>".

3.4. Study Scales

Information about the scales used to calculate organizational stress, organizational commitment and supervisor attitudes as part of the study are provided below.

3.4.1. Organizational Stress Scale

This scale was used in a research carried out by Uzun and Yiğit (2011) about mid-level hotel supervisors in connection with the issues of organizational stress and organizational commitment, and in another study Düzgün (2014) did to analyze the relationship between organizational stress and organizational commitment for high-level supervisors based on data obtained via a research conducted with a group of five-star hotels in Antalya.

In this research, on the other hand, "Cronbach Alpha," a measure of internal consistency, was calculated to find out about the reliability of the 17 articles in the organizational stress scale. The general reliability of the scale is $\alpha = 0.743$ and thus, regarded "high." As a result of factor analysis, variables were gathered under a single factor whose total variance is 50,579 %.

3.4.2. Organizational Commitment Scale

This scale was developed by Meyer and Allen (1990) and translated and adapted into Turkish by Yıldırım (2002). Uzun and Elif (2011) used this scale in a research they carried out with a group of mid-

level hotel supervisors in connection with the relationship between organizational stress and organizational commitment.

In this research, on the other hand, “Cronbach Alpha” was calculated to find out about the reliability of the 24 articles in the organizational commitment scale. The general reliability of the scale is $\alpha=0.909$ and considered “very high.” As a result of factor analysis, the variables were gathered under the three factors of “affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment” whose total variance is 56,106%.

3.4.3. Supervisor Attitude Scale

This scale consists of four articles taken from Kaya’s (2007) study on the factors that influence employees’ job satisfaction and a developed scale for job satisfaction. The reliability of the supervisor attitude scale is considered “very high (Cronbach Alpha =0.831). Barlett test done to show the structural reliability of the scale has proved that there is a correlation between the variables in the factor analysis ($p=0.000<0.05$).

Sample size is found to be sufficient ($KMO=0.788>0,60$) for factor analysis. By applying varimax (rotation) method, the structure of the correlation between the factors was kept stable.

Variables were gathered under a single factor whose variance is 66,404 %. The alpha value on reliability and the explained variance showed that Supervisor Attitude Scale is a valid and reliable tool. The factor structure obtained at the end of the analysis is shown in Table 02.

Table 02. Factor Structure of Supervisor Attitude Scale

Size	Article	Factor Load	Total Variance	Cronbach Alpha	KMO
SUPERVISOR ATTITUDE (Attribute= 2,656)	Man4	,835	66,404	0,831	0,788
	Man3	,820			
	Man2	,813			
	Man1	,791			

4. Findings

This part of the study talks about the findings obtained as a result of the analysis of the total data gathered from scales about the employees, who took part in the questionnaire, to solve the problems related to the study. Explanations and comments based on the obtained data have been done here.

4.1. Averages

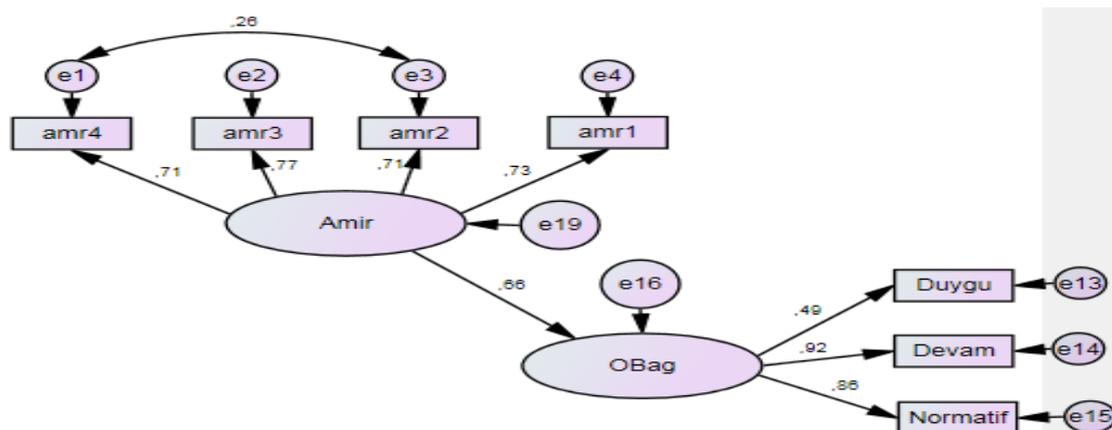
As shown in Table 03; the level of “supervisor attitude” perceived by the employees who took part in this study is “average” ($2,698 \pm 1,285$); “organizational stress level” is “average” ($2,735 \pm 0,690$); and “general organizational commitment” is “low” ($2,265 \pm 0,806$); while their “affective commitment” level is “low” ($2,440 \pm 0,767$); “continuance commitment” is “low” ($2,257 \pm 1,069$) and again their “normative commitment” level is “low” ($2,097 \pm 1,005$).

Table 03. Averages of organizational stress, organizational commitment and supervisor attitude levels of the employees taking part in the study

	<u>N</u>	<u>Avarage</u>	<u>Ss</u>	<u>Min.</u>	<u>Max.</u>
Supervisor Attitude (MA)	220	2,698	1,285	1,000	5,000
Organizational Stress (OStress)	220	2,735	0,690	1,470	5,000
General Organizational Commitment (GOC)	220	2,265	0,806	1,040	5,000
Affective Commitment (AC)	220	2,440	0,767	1,000	5,000
Continuance Commitment (CC)	220	2,257	1,069	1,000	5,000
Normative Commitment (NC)	220	2,097	1,005	1,000	5,000

4.2. Effect of Supervisor Attitude on Organizational Commitment

The path analysis diagram which shows the effect of supervisor attitude on organizational commitment is seen in Figure 01. Reference values of goodness of fit are shown in Table 01 whereas goodness of fit values about the model are shown in Table 05. Under the light of these values, it could be said that supervisor attitude has an effect on organizational commitment ($\beta=0,66$; $p<0,05$). Therefore, H1 hypothesis which argues that supervisor attitude affects the level of organizational commitment is accepted.



(“e” stands for “Error Term”; “Amir” for “Supervisor,” “Obag” for “Organizational Commitment,” “Duygu” for “Affective,” “Devam” for “Continuance” and “Normatif” for “Normative”).

Figure 01. Structural equation modeling about the effect of supervisor attitude on organizational commitment.

Goodness of fit values according to the model which shows the effect of supervisor attitude on organizational commitment are shown below in the Table 04.

Table 04. Goodness of fit values according to the model which shows the effect of supervisor attitude on organizational commitment

<u>X2</u>	<u>X2/sd</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>GFI</u>	<u>CFI</u>	<u>RMSEA</u>	<u>IFI</u>	<u>RMR</u>
30,374	2,531	0,002	0,962	0,973	0,08	0,974	0,068

4.3. Effect of Organizational Stress on Supervisor Attitude and Organizational Commitment

The path analysis diagram which shows the effect of organizational stress on supervisor attitude and organizational commitment is shown in Figure 02. Reference values of goodness of fit are in Table 01 while goodness of fit values based on the model (which explains the effect of organizational stress on

supervisor attitude and organizational commitment) are in Table 6. Under the light of these values, it is claimed that organizational stress has an effect on supervisor attitude ($\beta=0,60$; $p<0,05$) and organizational commitment ($\beta=0,57$; $p<0,05$). Therefore, the hypotheses of H2 and H3 above are accepted.

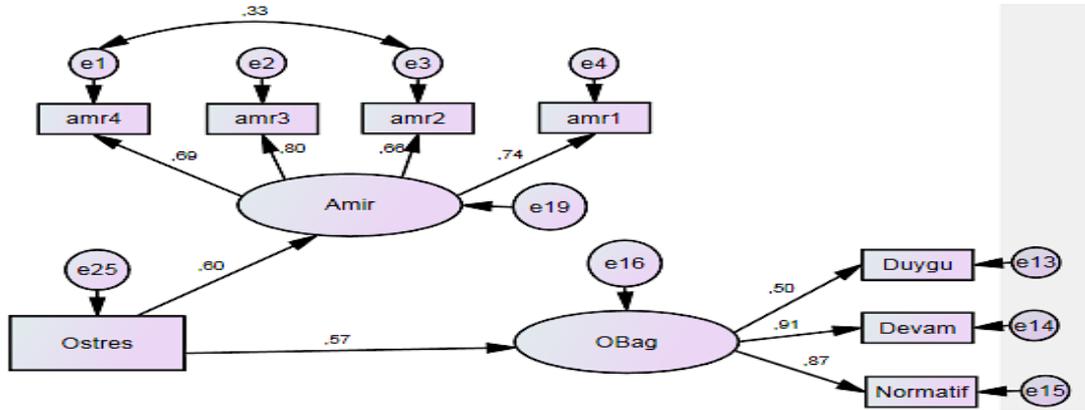


Figure 02. The path analysis diagram which shows the effect of organizational stress on supervisor attitude and organizational commitment

Goodness of fit values based on the model which explains the effect of organizational stress on supervisor attitude and organizational commitment are shown below in Table 05.

Table 05. Goodness of fit values based on the model which explains the effect of organizational stress on supervisor attitude and organizational commitment

X2	X2/sd	P	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	IFI	RMR
72,834	4,046	0,000	0,929	0,931	0,078	0,932	0,082

4.4. Supervisor Attitude’s Mediatory Role on the effect of Organizational Stress on Organizational Commitment

Data about supervisor attitude’s mediatory role on the effect of organizational stress on organizational commitment is shown in Figure 03 while the goodness of fit values of that model are seen in Table 06.

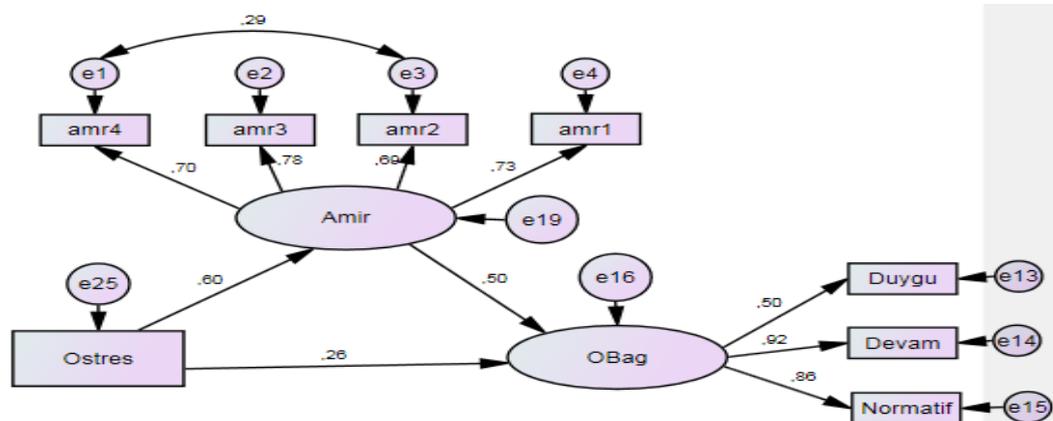


Figure 03. Path analysis diagram on supervisor attitude’s mediatory role on the effect of organizational stress on organizational commitment

Table 06. Goodness of fit values about the structural equation modeling on supervisor attitude's mediatory role on the effect of organizational stress on organizational commitment

X2	X2/sd	P	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	IFI	RMR
39,876	2,346	0,001	0,958	0,971	0,78	0,72	0,063

The direct and indirect effects of organizational stress on organizational commitment are shown in Table 07.

Table 07. The direct and indirect effect of organizational stress on organizational commitment

Total Effect	Organizational Stress	Supervisor
Supervisor	0,605	0
Organizational Commitment	0,566	0,499
Direct Effect	Organizational Stress	Supervisor
Supervisor	0,605	0
Organizational Commitment	0,265	0,499
Indirect Effect	Organizational Stress	Supervisor
Supervisor	0	0
Organizational Commitment	0,302	0

When these data are evaluated, it is deduced that organizational stress has an effect on organizational commitment ($\beta=0,57$; $p<0,05$), and if supervisor attitude is included in the model, this effect decreases ($\beta=0,26$; $p<0,05$).

As is seen in Figure 04, the total 57 percent effect of organizational stress on organizational commitment is made up of 26,5 percent direct effect and 30,2 percent indirect effect that is based on supervisor attitude. Additionally, the mediatory role is confirmed thanks to the results of Sobel test ($z=3,9097$; $p<0,05$).

Input:		Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a	0.964	Sobel test: 3.9097044	0.04314904	0.00009241
b	0.175	Aroian test: 3.88653062	0.04340632	0.00010169
s _a	0.121	Goodman test: 3.93329771	0.04289022	0.00008379
s _b	0.039	Reset all	Calculate	

Figure 04. Sobel test on mediatory role (<http://quantpsy.org/sobel/sobel.htm>)

Under the light of the data above, the hypothesis of H4 which supports the idea that supervisor attitude has mediatory role on the effect of organizational stress on organizational commitment is accepted.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

Organizational commitment is one of the serious concerns of the service sector where there is a constant turnover (in human resources). Finding new employees and recruiting and training them as well as helping them to adapt to organizations create financial difficulties for organizations while the transfer of qualified employees to other companies puts organizations into a disadvantageous position. For these

reasons, employees are seen as intellectual sources of fund and their commitment to organizations are dealt with strategically.

In this study, supervisor attitude's mediatory role in relation to the effect of organizational stress on organizational commitment is explored with the help of structural equation modeling. According to the obtained data, it has been found out that organizational stress affects organizational commitment ($\beta=0,57$; $p<0,05$) and this effect decreases if it occurs due to supervisor attitude and behaviors ($\beta=0,26$; $p<0,05$). Hence, supervisor attitude has an apparent mediatory role in the effect of organizational stress on organizational commitment. Supervisors need to be sensitive and cautious about the causes that negatively affect the employees' organizational commitment.

Moreover, if an individual does not feel some amount of stress which will fuel his or her desire for success, work done becomes monotonous and might lose its charm. Therefore, supervisors in organizations should know the sources of organizational stress well, not try to eliminate it totally and be competent in allowing it to remain at a certain level as a powerful and positive incentive. In this way, both performance and organizational commitment of an employee might increase.

Findings of the study clearly shows the importance of supervisor attitude for employees' organizational commitment. Thus, organizations should equip their supervisors with information about this issue and assist them cope with their relationships with employees as a strategic issue.

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