

Relationships between Power Distance, Organizational Commitment, and Trust in Schools

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Abstract

Power distance is important for the healthy execution of relations, interactions, and communication between managers and employees. Low power distance improves the quality of relationships, interactions, and communication between school administrators and teachers, while high power distance decreases them. The power distance that teachers believe to exist in school may be related to their organizational attitude, value and behaviour. In this context, the aim of the study is to examine the relationships between teachers' power distance beliefs and their organizational commitment and organizational trust. Research data were collected in Giresun, Turkey in 2018. The study group of the research consists of teachers working in public high schools. According to the results of the research, teachers' power distance beliefs are at “low” level. There are positive correlations between teachers' power distance beliefs and their organizational commitment and organizational trust. Teachers' power distance beliefs predict their organizational commitment and organizational trust. The results of the research are thought to contribute to the awareness of the importance of power distance of school administrators in terms of manager-teacher interaction.

Keywords: Power Distance, Organizational Commitment, Trust

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Introduction

Power values are among the most frequently used cultural values in organizations. Power distance refers to the degree to which individuals, organizations and societies accept inequalities in relation to power, status, and wealth (Hofstede, 1980). It can be defined as the unequal distribution of power in organizations in the organizational field (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Power distance affects decision making mechanisms in organizations, the hierarchical structure of the organization, and the level of centralization (Hofstede, 2001). In organizations, employees' perceptions of power distance can also affect employees' attitudes and behaviors. Employees who perceive high power distances are obedient to their managers (Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen & Lowe, 2009) and show strong respect (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). These employees do not want to participate in the decisions, they show an obedient attitude, the work of the employees is strictly defined and the employees are given limited discretion. Organizational communication is in the form of vertical communication. High power distance gives managers unlimited power and control over their subordinates (Khatri, 2009). Employees in sub-positions expect and obey orders from their managers (Hofstede, 2011). Sub-officers are expected to participate in the decisions taken in organizations with low power distances. In such organizations, managers care about equality and empowerment of employees, power distributions are fairer and sub-units are allowed to make decisions on issues that concern them (Hofstede, 2011; Soyalm, 2019). As the power distance in organizations increases, the relationship between perceived organizational support and work performance, commitment and organizational citizenship behavior weakens (Farh, Hackett & Liang, 2007). Employees' perceptions of justice, trust in the organization, job satisfaction and performance are lower in organizations with high power distances (Daniels & Greguras, 2014). There are important correlations between various organizational variables related to power distance. Organizations have significant relationships between power distance and employee engagement, employee involvement, job satisfaction, performance, organizational commitment and justice (Rafiei & Pourreza, 2013; Gul, Usman, Liu, Rehman & Jebran, 2018). In some research, teachers' perceptions of power distance and organizational silence (Göl-Dede, 2019) and organizational synergy (Ersoy, 2019) were examined.

Organizational Commitment with Organizational Power Distance Belief

One of the important variables related to power distance in organizations is organizational commitment (Lee & Antonakis, 2014; Wilson & Chaudhry, 2017). Organizational commitment refers to the biased and effective commitment of employees to the goals and values of the organization (Demirtaş & Güneş, 2002). Organizational commitment is important for teachers in orientation towards school goals in educational organizations. Teachers' commitment to their schools can be affected from the organizational health of the school (Hayat, Kohoulat, Kojuri, & Faraji, 2015), from the transformational leadership of the school principal (Zacharo, Marios & Dimitra, 2018) from

organizational cynicism (Helvacı & Kiliçoğlu, 2018; Ozdem, & Sezer, 2019) and organizational justice (Demir, 2016). Organizational commitment of the teacher can affect job satisfaction (Önder, Akçıl & Cemaloğlu, 2019; Demir, 2016; Ozdem, & Sezer, 2019) and job motivations (Tentama & Pranungsari, 2016). Teachers' job satisfaction and happiness in their schools can ensure that they feel more committed to the school (Uzun & Kesicioğlu, 2019). Researches in the field of education have found a relationship between teachers' power distance beliefs and emotional, attendance and normative commitments (Yıldırım & Deniz, 2014). Some research in the field of education also shows that power distance plays an important role in the relationship between employees' motivation and job motivation (Din, Bashir, Cheema & Zafar, 2014). Studies in different fields also suggest important correlations between the power distance perceived by the employees in the organizations and their organizational commitment (Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001; Lee & Antonakis, 2014; Wilson & Chaudhry, 2017).

Organizational Trust with Organizational Power Distance Belief

One of the important variables related to the power distance among the cultural values in the organization (Uslu & Ardiç, 2013) is organizational trust. Positive indicators for employees and organization depend on a corporate culture based on trust. Organizational trust emerges as an institutional value that can be described as a social adhesive that holds employees together (Uslu & Ardiç, 2013). Organizational trust is defined as the positive expectations of employees about the organizational roles, relationships, experiences and the behaviour and intentions of other members in the organization, based on mutual solidarity in the organization (Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis & Winograd, 2000). Studies in the field of education suggest that teachers' organizational trust is related to various variables. When the contributions of teachers to their schools are valued and their efforts are appreciated, teachers have more confidence in their schools (Kara, Güneş, & Aydoğan, 2015; Uzun, 2018b). As the organizational trust of teachers increases, their organizational identification (Uzun, 2018b), voluntary behaviours (Uzun, 2018a; Zeinabadi & Salehi, 2011) and job satisfaction (Çelebi & Tatık, 2019) increase and their intention to leave school (Uzun, 2018b) decreases. Uslu and Ardiç (2013) suggest that there is a relationship between the perceived power distance of academic and administrative staff and their organizational trust. Börü and İslamoğlu (2016) suggest that power distance makes significant contributions to employees' trust in their managers, colleagues and organizational policies.

Based on the theoretical knowledge and research results, the main purpose of the research was determined as examining the relationship between teachers' power distance beliefs and their organizational commitment and organizational trust. Based on this purpose, the following research questions were sought answer:

1. Is there a relationship between teachers' power distance beliefs and their organizational commitment?
2. Is there a relationship between teachers' power distance beliefs and their organizational trust?

Findings to be obtained by achieving the purposes of the research will make important contributions to educational administrators and researchers in order to better understand the organizational behaviour of the teacher. Investigation of power distance in educational organizations may offer opportunity to compare with research conducted in different organizations and organizational differences may be revealed. The concept of organizational power distance is a cultural concept; it is thought that the findings can be important for researchers in understanding cultural differences. There are few studies that examine power distance in educational organizations. Research results can also be considered important in terms of expanding the concept of power distance in the field of education management.

Method

Research Model

The survey model (figure 1) was used to determine the relationship between teachers' power distance beliefs and their organizational commitment and organizational trust for their schools.

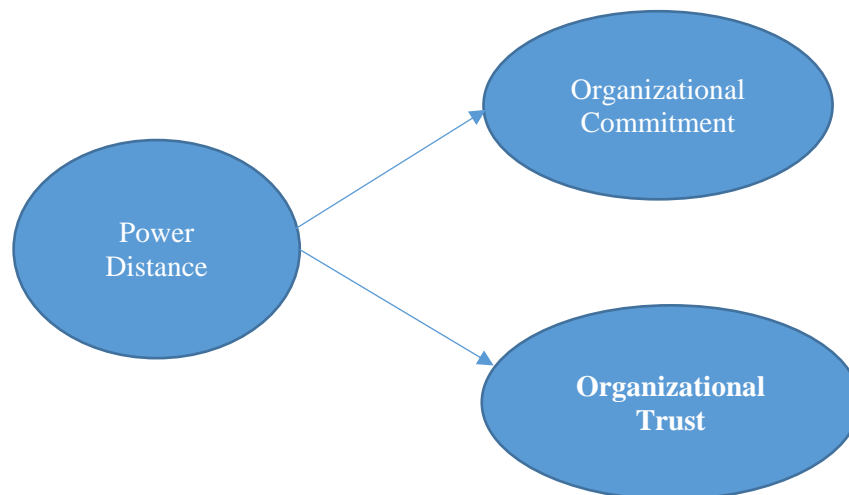


Figure 1. Research Model

Study Group

It consists of 173 teachers working in high schools affiliated to Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in, Giresun City Center, Turkey. All of these schools were visited for data collection and the scales were distributed to 235 volunteering teachers. There were 194 returns from the forms in which the scales were included. 11 of these forms were left out of analysis due to lacking information, and 10 were excluded from analysis during normality and linearity tests. Thus, 173 valid forms were evaluated for the analysis. 74 (42.8%) of the teachers are female and 99 (57.2%) are male.

Data Collection Tools

Power Distance Belief Scale: The scale was developed by Dorfman and Howell (1988). It is adapted to Turkish by Akyol (2009). The scale consists of 6 items and one dimension. Scale is a 5-point Likert type. In the current research, the Cronbach-Alpha value was calculated as $\alpha = 0.77$.

Organizational Commitment Scale: The scale was developed by Jaworski and Kohli (1993). It is adapted to Turkish by Şeşen (2010). The scale, which is in Likert type, consists of 7 items. The scale has a one-dimensional structure. In the current research, the Cronbach-Alpha value was calculated as $\alpha = 0.62$.

Organizational Trust Scale: The scale was developed by Tyler and Bies (1990). It is adapted to Turkish by Polat (2009). The scale consists of 4 items and one dimension. Scale is a 5-point Likert type. In the current research, the Cronbach-Alpha value was calculated as $\alpha = 0.86$.

Confirmatory factor analysis was done for the scales used in the current research. Confirmatory Factor Analysis results regarding the scales used in the current research are given in Table 1.

Table 1. CFA Results on Scales

Fit Indices	χ^2/df	RMR	GFI	AGFI
Power Distance	3.30	0.06	0.94	0.87
Organizational Commitment	3.50	0.07	0.95	0.87
Organizational Trust	2.30	0.03	0.99	0.99

The current research scales which were conducted again for the reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis of the values for the Cronbach-Alpha prove the reliability and validity of the scales.

Analyzing of Data

Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used in the research.

Results

Descriptive statistics about variables and relationships between variables are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variables	\bar{x}	sd	1	2	3
1. Power Distance	1.94	.68	-		
2. Organizational Commitment	3.58	.46	.25**	-	
3. Organizational Trust	3.71	.75	.15*	.51**	-

**p<0.01 *p<0.05

According to Table 2, power distance general averages of teachers are computed as $\bar{x} = 1.94$, organizational trust general averages as $\bar{x} = 3.71$, organizational commitment general averages as $\bar{x} =$

3.58. There is a positive significant low correlation between teachers' power distance beliefs and their organizational commitment ($r = .25, p < .01$), between power distance beliefs and their organizational trust ($r = .15, p < .05$), between their organizational trust and organizational commitment ($r = .51, p < .01$).

Regression analysis was conducted to reveal how teachers' power distance beliefs predict their organizational commitment. The results of the simple linear regression analysis regarding the predictability of teachers' power distance beliefs to their organizational commitment are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression Analysis Results regarding the Prediction of Power Distance Beliefs

Variables	B	Standard Error	β	t	p
Constant	3.258	0.103	-	31.740	0.000
Organizational Commitment	0.166	0.050	0.247	3.336	0.001
R=0.247 ^a R ² =0.061 F=11.127 p=0.001					

p<0.01

According to Table 3, teachers' power distance beliefs are a significant predictor of their organizational commitment (R=0.247^a R²=0.061, F=11.127, p=0.001). According to the findings, it is seen that approximately 6% of the total variance related to teachers' organizational commitment is explained with the power distance beliefs. According to Table 3, the result of the t test regarding the significance of the regression coefficient is also significant. Teachers' power distance beliefs predict their organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.247, p < 0.01$) positively and significantly.

Regression analysis was conducted to reveal how teachers' power distance beliefs predict their organizational trust. Simple linear regression analysis results related to teachers' power distance beliefs predicting organizational trust in are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results regarding the Prediction of Power Distance Beliefs

Variables	B	Standard Error	β	t	p
Constant	3.392	0.171	-	19.887	0.000
Organizational Trust	0.164	0.083	0.150	1.982	0.049
R=0.150 ^a R ² =0.02 F=3.929 p=0.049					

p<0.05

According to Table 4, teachers' power distance beliefs are a significant predictor of their organizational trust (R=.150^a, R²=0.02, F=3.929, p=.049). According to the findings, approximately 2% of the total variance related to teachers' organizational trust is explained by their power distance beliefs. According to Table 4, the result of the t test regarding the significance of the regression coefficient is also significant. Teachers' power distance beliefs predict their organizational commitment ($\beta = .150, p < .05$) positively and significantly.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Power distance is important for the healthy execution of relationships, interactions and communication between school administrators and teachers. The distance of power that teachers believe to exist in school may be related to their organizational attitude, value and behaviour. In this context, the relationship between teachers' power distance beliefs and their organizational commitment and trust was examined.

According to the results of the research, teachers' power distance beliefs are positively correlated with their organizational commitment and organizational trust at a low level and their power distance beliefs predict their organizational commitment. When teachers expect that power is distributed unevenly at schools and acknowledge unequal distribution of the power, in other words when they accept hierarchy and inequality as normal, their organizational commitment and organizational trust to their schools increases at a quite low level. As long as teachers accept to be dependent on the structure created by school administrators and their instructions, their commitment and trust to their school increases at a low level, too. This may be resulted from Turkey's cultural characteristics. Management in organizations and managers are respected and valued at a considerable extent in Turkey. Usage of power and authority more than to a certain extent by management may often be accepted by employees. In addition, strong management is often considered as being strong organizations. This may have led to a weak increase in organizational commitment and trust of teachers as their organizational power distance beliefs increase. Also, Turkey is shown among the countries with high power distance (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). In cultures with high power distance; The vast majority of employees are obedient and show strong respect to their managers. Employees who work in organizations with such a culture; are expected to fulfill their managers' instructions, orders and directions without questioning. In many organizations, it is considered normal for those who are in the management position to have more power, to have more authority and status (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 2011). However, schools in Turkey are not too many hierarchical, bureaucratic and authoritarian organizations. According to this study, although teachers' power distance beliefs are not high, teachers may have been influenced by the general beliefs about power distance in their culture. This general belief concerning power distance may have had a positive effect on teachers' organizational commitment and organizational trust even though this effect is quite weak. This result supports the researches of Kirkman and Shapiro (2001), Lee and Antonakis (2014), Lee and Antonakis (2014), Seymen and Kormaz (2017), Wilson and Chaudhry (2017) who demonstrate that there are positive correlations between employees' perceptions of power distance and organizational commitment. Wilson and Chaudhry (2017) in their research conducted in a software company in India suggest that as the power distance of the employees increases, their organizational commitment also increases at a low level. Yıldırım and Deniz (2014) also suggest a low positive correlation between teachers' perception of power distance and their attendance commitment.

However, according to Yıldırım and Deniz (2014), there is a negative correlation between the emotional and normative commitment of teachers. Seymen and Kormaz (2017) suggest that there is a low-level relationship between perceptions of organizational power distance and organizational commitment of people who works at health sector, too. The result of the current research which suggests that there is a relationship between teachers' power distance beliefs and their organizational trust supports the research results of Uslu and Ardiç (2013), Börü and İslamoğlu (2016) and Gürce (2018). Uslu and Ardiç (2013) suggest that there is a correlation between the perceived power distance of academic and administrative staff and their organizational trust. Börü and İslamoğlu (2016) suggest that power distance makes significant contributions to employees' trust in their managers, colleagues and organizational policies. Gürce (2018) reports that the perceived power distance of those working in the private and public sector (white and blue collar) positively predicts organizational trust (trust in the manager and the organization).

One of the important results of the research was the low level of teachers' power distance beliefs. This result may have been caused by the facts that the schools are not too overly bureaucratic and hierarchical organizations, the teachers participate in decision-making at the school (Köylü & Gündüz, 2019), the school principals in Turkey are of teacher origin. The result of the current research supports the research results of Göl-Dede (2019) and Gül (2019) and Kocabıyık (2017) which find teachers' power distance acceptance levels at the low level. In surveys conducted in Turkey in recent years (including current research) power distance perception were found to be low and moderate in many organizations (Gürce, 2018; Gül, 2019, Göl-Dede, 2019; Koçabıyık, 2017; Ulus, 2018; Yıldırım & Deniz; 2014; Soyalm, 2019; Şen, 2019; Yüksel, 2016). Hofstede considers Turkey among the countries with high power distance (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). However, it has been a long time since Hofstede published its research results on IBM employees in 1984. Researches (Gürce, 2018; Gül, 2019, Göl-Dede, 2019; Koçabıyık, 2017; Ulus, 2018; Yıldırım & Deniz; 2014; Soyalm, 2019; Şen, 2019; Yüksel, 2016) conducted in recent years in Turkey indicate that power distance decreases day by day. In this past time, there has been serious progress and achievements in the field of education-training, technological development and innovation, democracy and freedom. It is thought that these changes may have effects on power distance (Gül, 2019).

According to the results of the research, the following suggestions can be made: A more democratic and participatory management approach should be adopted in schools and an effective communication network should be established. A comprehensive study covering educational, health, industrial, safety, etc. organizations in Turkey must be conducted and power distances beliefs of the employees must be comparatively determined. Hofstede's power distance aspect regarding organizational culture can be updated for Turkey. In educational organizations, the relationship of power distance belief with other organizational variables can be examined. The main limitation of the

research is that the research covers only high schools in Giresun province. The research can be conducted in all provinces of Turkey and an overall assessment can be made.

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