The Relationship Between Organizational Justice, Professional Motivation and Organizational Identification: A Study on Teachers

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between organizational justice, professional motivation and organizational identification. In this study, relational model was used. The population of the study consists of teachers from primary schools in the province of Gaziantep in Turkey during 2019-2020 academic year, and the sample consists of 368 primary school teachers. The data were collected through "Organizational Justice Scale", "Professional Motivation Scale" and "Organizational Identification Scale". In the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics about the variables were calculated, correlation and regression analysis were performed. According to the descriptive statistical results of the study, teachers' perceptions of organizational justice, professional motivation and organizational identification are at a high level. Organizational justice has a positive, moderate relationship with professional motivation and organizational identification. Besides, there is a positive and moderate relationship between professional motivation and organizational identification. As a result of the stepwise multiple regression analysis conducted to determine the relationship between professional motivation, organizational justice, and organizational identification, it was determined that professional motivation has a partial mediating role in the relationship between organizational justice and organizational identification. It is considered important to increase the motivation of teachers by treating them equally and fairly in the distribution of resources to identify with the school. Moreover, with the increase in motivation, it can be ensured that teachers increase their performance and identify with their organizations.

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Introduction

In schools, where the human resources of the society are raised, teachers have an important role in the effective management of educational activities. Teachers work hard to fulfill both their individual goals and the duties and responsibilities expected by the schools. The level of this hard work may vary according to teachers' perceptions of justice. In other words, fairness and consideration of ethical rules in decisions taken, practices, and distribution of resources positively affect the performance of teachers (Akar, 2018; Cheung & Law, 2008; Duffield & McCuen, 2000). Besides, a high perception of justice leads teachers to embrace their schools by improving their sense of belonging and commitment (Başar & Sığrı, 2015; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Therefore, it can be stated that teachers who embrace and identify themselves with their school will work hard towards achieving the goals of the school and have higher professional motivation. In this context, this study gives suggestions based on the findings obtained by examining the relationships between these variables.

Literature Review

In today's business life, individuals are expected to work in order to achieve the goals of their organization, aside from their personal goals and to perform according to this. The level of performance in question can vary according to perceptions of justice of the organization. According to Adams (1965) equality theory, the concept of justice is considered within the framework of a social change. When deciding whether the organization they work in is fair or not, employees often compare the contribution/reward rates of other employees working in similar conditions with their achievements (Judge & Colquitt, 2004). Organizational justice, expressed in various ways in the literature, is defined as the reflection of the general sense of justice on the working environment, and the rules on the management and distribution of rewards and punishments (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001; Moorman, 1991). Organizational justice, which was discussed in two dimensions as distributive justice and procedural justice at first, started to be evaluated in three dimensions with the addition of a third dimension as interactional justice in later studies (Eskew, 1993; Greenberg, 1990; Roch & Shanock, 2006). Within the scope of this study, organizational justice is discussed in three dimensions: *distributive justice, procedural justice* and *interactional justice. Distributive justice*, employees' assessment of performance outcomes such as salary, rewards and promotion, and their attitudes towards the distribution of resources (rewards, money, promotions, etc.); *procedural justice,* employees' perceptions of the fairness of the methods and processes used in the allocation of resources rather than the allocation of resources itself, and *interactional justice*, managers' attitudes and behaviors towards employees during the implementation of procedures (Moorman, 1991; Jawahar, 2002). In the light of this information, it can be argued that organizational justice - which has an important role in the attitudes and behaviors of employees in the organizational environment - is a preliminary variable of organizational identification of employees.

Organizational identification is becoming increasingly important as a key concept in the field of organizational behavior. Because it is accepted as a determining factor in forming psychological bonds with the organization, as well as the attitudes and behaviors of the employees in the organizational environment (Edwards, 2005). Organizational identification means that employees perceive themselves as part of a whole and establish a psychological bond with the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Van Kippenberg & Sleebos 2006). Individuals, who identified themselves with the organization they work for, express themselves considering the identity of the organization which they are a member of and act accordingly by seeing the goals of the organization as their own (Wiesenfeld et al., 2001). This will contribute to increasing the motivation of employees by ensuring that they identify with their organizations, and develop positive attitudes and behaviors.

Motivation, which is defined as action programs and behavioral patterns that individuals develop according to their desired goals, plays an important role in the performance of the individual and the organization (Laming, 2004). Professional motivation, on the other hand, is defined as a process that empowers and guides the behavior of individuals in the organizational environment (Leonard et al., 1999). It is extremely important to have high and sustainable motivation in the teaching profession, which is affected by many factors such as students, parents, school administrators, curriculum, and education policies (Ceviz, 2018). In this regard, Yılmaz (2009) stated that the high level of professional motivation of teachers is a determining factor in an effective and productive educational environment, job satisfaction and performance; moreover, Aypay (2011) drew attention to the importance of professional motivation by emphasizing that it is one of the prerequisites of being a good teacher. Therefore, professional motivation increases the performance of teachers and enables them to develop positive attitudes and behaviors towards both their school and their profession.

It can be observed in the literature that various studies have been conducted to determine the relationship between the variables. Tyler (2000) argued that the perception of justice shapes the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of individuals, and therefore organizational justice is an important determinant of organizational identification. Being fair and impartial in procedures in the organizational environment, adopting practices that meet the expectations and needs of individuals, and respecting their work increase organizational identification (Cheung & Law, 2008; Chen et al., 2015; Moorman, 1991; Olkkonen & Lipponen, 2006). In this context, Hoy and Miskel (2010) referred to the relationship between organizational justice and motivation by stating that one of the most important determinants of individual motivation is the belief that the individual is treated equally with other employees in the organization. There are findings indicating that organizational justice positively affects motivation of individuals (Liao & Tai, 2006; Misra et al., 2013), and being fair when implementing rules and in interpersonal interactions increases motivation (Barling & Michelle, 1993). When the concepts of organizational justice and motivation are evaluated within the context of

education, it can be argued that taking justice into consideration in school practices and establishing qualified communication with teachers will positively affect professional motivation. The identification between motivation levels of individuals and organizational outcomes has a positive relationship with motivation (Akman, 2018; Ceviz, 2018; Mael & Ashforth, 1995; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Van Dick & Wagner, 2002). In a study conducted by Akman (2017) on the relationship between professional motivation and identification, it was stated that identification is related to motivation, professional motivation increases identification, and individuals who identify with their organization will perform at a higher level. Based on these statements, it can be said that teachers who feel comfortable in the work environment, who love their profession, and who see themselves as a part of the school will identify more with their school.

The abovementioned statements indicate that being fair in the work and procedures in schools contributes to teachers' identification with the school by increasing their professional motivation. Although there are various studies on these variables in the literature, no study has been found in which three of these variables are evaluated together and the mediation role is examined. In this context, this study aims to determine the relationship between organizational justice, professional motivation and organizational identification. For this purpose, following questions were tried to be answered.

1. What are the teachers' perception levels of organizational justice, professional motivation, and organizational identification?

2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between organizational justice, professional motivation, and organizational identification?

3. Does professional motivation have a mediating role in the relationship between organizational justice and organizational identification?

Method

Research Model

The study was designed with the relational model, which aims to determine the existence and direction of the relationship between two or more variables (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this context, after determining the relationship between organizational justice, professional motivation, and organizational identification variables, predictions were made about the possibility of a cause-effect relationship between these variables.

Sample

The population of the study consists of teachers from primary schools in the province of Gaziantep in Turkey during 2019-2020 academic year, and the sample consists of 368 primary school teachers selected by disproportionate cluster sampling method from the primary schools in this

population. The scale form was distributed to approximately 475 teachers, taking the return rate into consideration. Of the 382 returned scales, 14 scales that were incomplete and incorrectly filled were excluded from the analysis. It was decided that 368 teachers were sufficient for 95% confidence level and α=.05 significance by using the formula prepared for known sizes of the main mass number (Field, 2009), 77.47% of the scales were considered valid and analyzes were made on 368 scales. 66.6% of the teachers (n=245) in the sample were female, (n=123) 33.4% were male; (n=213) 57.9% were married, and (n=155) 42.1 were single. According to age groups, (n=211) 57.3% were in the age group of 21-30, (n=134) 36.4% were in the age group of 31-40, (n=23) 6.3% were in the age group of 41 and above.

Data Collection Tools

"Organizational Justice", "Professional Motivation" and "Organizational Identification" scales were used as data collection tools in the study, aside from the personal information of teachers. 5-point Likert scale has been used in all scales as; "strongly disagree (1)", "disagree (2)", "slightly agree (3)", "agree (4)" and "totally agree (5)".

Organizational Justice Scale: The scale, developed by Hoy and Tarter (2004) and adapted to Turkish by Taşdan and Yılmaz (2008), consists of 10 items and one dimension. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is determined as .85. The construct validity of the scale was tested by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In the analysis phase, modifications were made by adding covariance between the error terms of OJ3 and OJ5 and OJ6 and OJ7, and thus the model fit values were increased. As a result of CFA, mostly χ^2, χ^2/df, GFI, NFI, IFI, TLI, CFI, RMSEA, RMR values are reported (Kline, 2011). These values are also reported within the scope of this study. According to the CFA result, model fit values are identified as; χ^2=53.263, χ^2/df=3.133, GFI=0.974, NFI=0.963, IFI=0.975, TLI=0.958, CFI=0.974, RMR=0.021, RMSEA=0.076, and it has been concluded that these values are at acceptable levels (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). This result provides evidence that the unidimensional structure of the scale was confirmed in the research sample and that the scale was structurally appropriate.

Professional Motivation Scale: The scale developed by Ceviz (2018) consists of 30 items and 5 sub-dimensions (*pleasure, value, commitment, dedication,* and *contribution*). In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is calculated as .93. In the CFA stage, a modification was made by adding covariance between the error terms of PM1 and PM2 items, and PM24 was removed because it was associated with items of different dimensions and increased the chi-square value. Thus, model fit values were increased. According to the CFA result, model fit values are found to be in acceptable level as; χ^2=1007.538, χ^2/df=2.760, GFI=0.834, NFI=0.894, IFI=0.930, TLI=0.922, CFI=0.929, RMR=0.021, RMSEA=0.069 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). This

result is evidence that the five-dimensional structure of the scale was confirmed in the research sample and that the scale was structurally appropriate.

Organizational Identification Scale: The scale, developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992) and adapted to Turkish by Tak and Aydemir (2004), consists of 6 items and one dimension. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is calculated as .81. As a result of CFA, model fit values are found to be; χ^2=15.400, χ^2/df=1.711, GFI=0.986, NFI=0.958, IFI=0.982, TLI=0.970, CFI=0.982, RMR=0.013, RMSEA=0.044. These values are at acceptable levels (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). This result shows that the one-dimensional structure of the scale was confirmed in the research sample.

Data Analysis

SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 23.0 statistical package programs were used for data analysis. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of organizational justice, professional motivation, and organizational identification. Before the regression analysis, required assumptions (multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, extreme values, linearity and normality) were tested. For the multicollinearity problem; the binary correlations between independent variables were identified to be less than .90; VIF values of independent variables to be less than .10, and tolerance values to be greater than .10. These values show that there is no multicollinearity problem. Besides, it was determined that the values of the independent variables in the data set and the variances in the subsets of the dependent variables are equal to each other (homoscedasticity). The extreme values were determined using Mahalanobis distances and it was concluded that the values were below 13.82 (Pallant, 2005), which is considered to be the critical value. The linearity and normality assumptions of the data were determined by calculating the skewness and kurtosis coefficients. Since the values obtained varied between -1.5 and +1.5, the data were found to be normally distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). As a result, the analyzes were carried out by providing the assumptions required for the regression analysis.

Results

Descriptive statistics (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and standard error) and correlation coefficients regarding variables are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Coefficients Regarding Variables

Variables	*Mean*	*SD*	*SE*	1	2	3
1. Organizational Justice	3.95	0.50	0.03	1		
2. Professional Motivation	3.88	0.38	0.02	.402**	1	
3. Organizational Identification	3.85	0.42	0.02	.530**	.376**	1

** Correlation is significant (p<.01)

As seen in Table 1, organizational justice (*M*=3.95, *SD*=0.50), professional motivation (*M*=3.88, *SD*=0.38), and organizational identification (*M*=3.85, *SD*=0.42) perception levels are high. This result can be interpreted as teachers' perception of justice in schools, their motivation towards their profession, and their level of identification with the school in general.

In Table 1, correlation coefficients between organizational justice, professional motivation, and organizational identification vary between .376 and .530. A moderate positive correlation between organizational justice and professional motivation (*r*=.402**, *p*<.01); There is a moderate positive correlation between organizational justice and organizational identification (*r*=.530**, *p*<.01); There is a moderate positive correlation between professional motivation and organizational identification (*r*=.376**, *p*<.01).

The Role of Professional Motivation in Organizational Justice and Organizational Identification Relationship

The results of the stepwise multiple regression analysis conducted to determine the relationship between professional motivation, organizational justice, and organizational identification are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Regression Analysis Results Regarding The Role of Professional Motivation in The Relationship between Organizational Justice and Organizational Identification

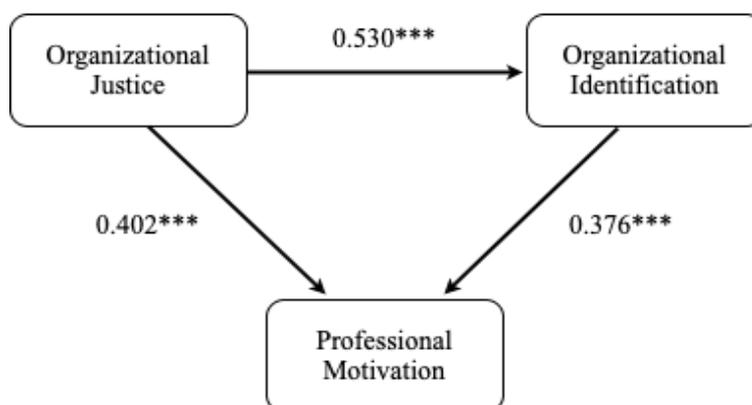| Model	Independent variables	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*t*	*p*
1. step (enter)	(constant)	4.168	0.109		38.315	.000
	Gender (dummy)	-0.114	0.046	-0.127	-2.476	.014
	Age	-0.009	0.003	-0.134	-2.614	.009
2. step	(constant)	2.359	0.181		13.031	.000
	Gender (dummy)	-0.024	0.040	-0.027	-0.604	.546
	Age	-0.008	0.003	-0.121	-2.755	.006
	Organizational Justice	0.444	0.038	0.522	11.649	.000
3. step	(constant)	1.774	0.236		7.515	.000
	Gender (dummy)	-0.010	0.040	-0.011	-0.255	.799
	Age	-0.007	0.003	-0.102	-2.338	.020
	Organizational Justice	0.385	0.041	0.453	9.509	.000
	Professionel Motivation	0.199	0.053	0.180	3.768	.000

Dependent variable: Organizational Identification, R=.568, R^2=.323, ΔR^2=.316, $F_{(4,363)}$= 43.318, *p*<.001

As can be seen in Table 2, in the stepwise multiple regression analysis, it is found that the organizational justice added in step 2 positively and significantly predicted the organizational identification, after adding the gender and age control variables to the model in step 1. In step 3, professional motivation was added to the model and it was found that both professional motivation and organizational justice positively and significantly predicted the organizational identification. The

decrease in the predictive power of organizational justice with the addition of professional motivation to the model and the significance of this decrease ($p<.001$) provides evidence that professional motivation has a partial mediating role in the relationship between organizational justice and organizational identification. ΔR^2 value was examined to determine the level of independent predictive contributions that contribute to the model statistically in the prediction of organizational identification; and it was determined that organizational justice and professional motivation variables, together with gender and age, explain 31.6% of organizational identification ($\Delta R^2=.316$, $F_{(4,363)}=43,318$, $p<.001$).

When the t values in Table 2 are examined, it can be observed that the constant number, organizational justice, and professional motivation are significant at $p<.001$, and age is significant at $p<.05$ level. The equation obtained as a result of stepwise multiple regression analysis is; "Organizational Identification=1.774 + -.010* Gender (dummy) + -.007*Age + .385*Organizational Justice + .199*Professional Motivation". With the help of this formula, the predictive level of organizational justice and professional motivation on organizational identification can be estimated when gender and age variables are taken under control.

The significance of the mediating effect of professional motivation was determined using the Sobel Test. In this context, the values were entered into the MedGraph-I program, developed by Jose (2003), and the results shown in Figure 1 below are obtained.

Figure 1. Mediating Role of Professional Motivation

Table 3. Sobel Test Results for Mediating Effect

Mediating Role	Partial
Sobel Z-Value	3.394791
p	0.000687
Direct Effect	0.453
Indirect Effect	0.077
Total Effect	0.530

According to Table 3, the mediating effect of professional motivation is significant at *p*<.001 level. It was determined that the direct effect of organizational justice on organizational identification was determined is *β*=0.453, the indirect effect due to the mediating effect of professional motivation is *β*=0.077, and the total effect *β*=0.530. This result shows that professional motivation has a partial mediating role in the relationship between organizational justice and organizational identification. In other words, organizational justice has a positive and significant effect on organizational identification, both directly and through professional motivation.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, the relationship between organizational justice, professional motivation, and organizational identification have been evaluated. According to the descriptive statistical results of the study, teachers' perceptions of organizational justice, professional motivation and organizational identification are at a high level. This finding can be interpreted as teachers think that the practices in schools are generally equal and fair, and their professional motivation and identification with their schools are high. As a result of the correlation analysis conducted to determine the direction and level of the relationship between variables, it was found that the variables had a moderate, positive and significant relationship with each other. In other words, the increase in teachers' perception of organizational justice will increase their motivation towards their profession and their identification level with their schools, on the contrary, when their organizational justice perception levels are low, their professional motivation and identification levels will decrease.

It was found that there is a positive relationship between organizational justice and organizational identification, supporting the findings obtained in various studies (Chen et al., 2015; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Olkkonen & Lipponen, 2006) on the relationship between organizational justice and organizational identification. In this regard, Chen et al. (2015) stated that organizations' being impartial while determining the procedures affecting employees and acting according to meet the expectations of the employees will increase the organizational identification, and Olkkonen and Lipponen (2006) stated that the procedures for ensuring justice and the distribution of justice are important factors for identification of employees with their organizations. However, the result of the positive relationship between organizational justice and the professional motivation of the teachers obtained by this research coincides with the results of similar studies in the literature. Hoy and Miskel (2010) referred to the relationship between organizational justice and motivation by stating that one of the most important determinants of individual motivation is the belief that the individual is treated equally with other employees in the organization. Based on this information, it can be argued that the sharing of the resources of the school, the reward/punishment system, the fairness of school administrators in their attitudes and behaviors towards teachers will increase professional motivation and organizational identification levels of teachers.

As a result of the stepwise multiple regression analysis conducted to determine the relationship between professional motivation, organizational justice, and organizational identification, it was determined that professional motivation has a partial mediating role in the relationship between organizational justice and organizational identification. In other words, organizational justice predicts organizational identification both directly and through professional motivation. There are findings indicating that organizational justice positively affects motivation of individuals (Liao & Tai, 2006; Misra et al., 2013), and being fair when implementing rules and in interpersonal interactions increases motivation (Barling & Michelle, 1993). Eisenberger et al. (1990) argued that caring about and meeting (or trying to meet) the needs of employees is an indication that organizations treat their employees with respect. Studies have revealed that organizational justice positively affects organizational identification (Chen et al., 2015; Başar & Sığrı, 2015). If employees consider mechanisms such as resource sharing, reward&punishment system, attitudes and behaviors of managers, and taking opinions of employees as fair, the level of their identification with the organization will increase (Cheung & Law, 2008). In light of this information, it can be argued that organizational justice increases teachers' professional motivation and organizational identification level, which supports the findings of this study.

When the results of the study were evaluated in general, it was revealed that teachers' perceptions of organizational justice increased their professional motivation and, accordingly, was an important determinant in their identification with the school. From this point of view, it is considered important to increase the motivation of teachers by treating them equally and fairly in the distribution of resources to identify with the school. Moreover, with the increase in motivation, it can be ensured that teachers increase their performance and identify with their organizations. Teachers' identification with their schools will contribute to the effective realization of educational goals by making them more productive and increasing their performance levels. In future studies, there can be research on different variables, which are considered to be the antecedents of organizational identification, such as self-efficacy, school culture, personality traits, and leader-member interaction. Qualitative and mixed studies can be conducted to determine variables that may negatively affect teachers' identification with their schools. HLM or Multilevel SEM analyzes can be used to determine which variables affect the findings at school level or teacher level.

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