Workplace Ostracism And Organizational Commitment: A Study On Healthcare Employees

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ABSTRACT

Workplace ostracism is defined as individuals being excluded or ignored by other employees. Organizational commitment, on the other hand, is the individual's identification with the organization and intra-organizational activities and their sincere commitment to them and therefore willingness to make a superior effort. The main purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment and to reveal how employees' perceptions of workplace ostracism have an effect on their organizational commitment. For this purpose, a survey-based research was conducted with the total participation in Trabzon University. Within the scope of this study, a survey-based field study was conducted on 148 academicians. As a result of this research, it was determined that the perception of workplace exclusion had negative effects on affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, which represent organizational commitment.

Keywords: Wokplace Ostracism, Organizational Commitment, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment

1. INTRODUCTION

Positive or negative behaviors exhibited by people or groups in front of them affect the communication and relationships of individuals with them. For this reason, negative emotions such as restlessness, tension, disappointment and anger may occur in individuals who encounter undesirable situations such as rejection or being excluded from the group in their environment. The emergence of such negative emotions in the organization is expressed as organizational ostracism, and this situation can create serious problems for employees in the long term.

Workplace ostracism is seen as a serious and widespread concern for today's organizations. Indeed, ostracism is a phenomenon that causes behavioral disorders in employees and constantly creates negative effects on their behaviors and emotions (Karim et al., 2021). The phenomenon of workplace ostracism, which occurs when individuals are excluded, ignored or neglected by other employees, is a widely accepted type of "cold violence" (Hejazi et al., 2015).

Workplace ostracism is an extremely powerful variable that reduces the sense of commitment to the organization and also affects the performance required for the job (Rehman et al., 2021). It may not be possible for employees who have the perception of being excluded in the organization to exhibit positive behaviors such as organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment means feeling a part of the organization and being ready to dedicate oneself to the organization (Na-Nan et al., 2021). Organizational commitment is defined as the extent to which individuals feel connected to the organization they work for (Miao, Newman, Schwarz, & Xu, 2013). Employees with a high level of organizational commitment are more willing to help the organization through their time and skills (Van Schaijk, 2018).

In this study, we discussed organizational commitment in three dimensions (Affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment). Affective commitment refers to the employee's identification with the organization and participation in corporate activities (Hasani et al., 2013). Continuance commitment refers to the commitment based on the costs associated with the employee's intention to leave the organization (Bakhshi et al., 2011). Finally, normative commitment is also expressed as a sense of responsibility based on belief that develops as a result of socialization experiences emphasizing that it would be appropriate for the employee to remain loyal to the organization and characterizes staying in the organization as moral and correct (Örücü & Kışlalıoğlu, 2014).

Based on the explanations above, our main purpose in this study is to investigate the effect of the feeling of ostracism that employees perceive in their workplaces on their commitment to the organization.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Workplace Ostracism and Organizational Commitment

The key to organizational success is closely related to employees' commitment to the organization (Sjahruddin, 2013). Organizational commitment includes people's feelings about the organizations they work for, that is, the extent to which they identify with the organizations that employ them (Bakhshi et al., 2011). Employees who feel that they are valued by their organizations can develop psychological perceptions that they are very close to their organizations. This situation increases the sense of commitment of employees to their organizations (Wang et al., 2021).

Commitment is negatively affected by exclusion (Eickholt & Goodboy, 2017). As the organizational commitment of the excluded employees to their organizations decreases, the trust of the employees to their colleagues and the organization is damaged (Tandon et al., 2022). The phenomenon of exclusion in the workplace, which is an important factor affecting the beliefs, feelings and behaviors of employees, expresses a negative situation that arises as a result of employees' indifference to organizational issues. This situation will increase the sense of alienation of employees from their organizations over time, greatly reducing their sense of belonging to the organization and thus their organizational commitment (Wang et al., 2021).

Factors that cause workplace ostracism may be demographic, such as gender, age, and education, as well as some organizational reasons (Rehman et al., 2021). Behaviors such as incomplete information, indifference, avoidance of eye contact, not being in the same environment, ignoring her/him in conversations, being unresponsive, intentionally or unintentionally made by his colleagues can be counted among these organizational reasons. Such behaviors that occur within the organization can alienate employees from each other and make them feel excluded. (Karim et al., 2021). Being exposed to workplace ostracism causes weakening of social relations (Chen & Li, 2019), and so excluded employees feel marginalized. Ostracism can affect their behaviors in the workplace by causing psychological and physically harm to them (Liu, Xia, 2016). In this context, it is thought that employees who feel hurt will also experience a decrease in their commitment to the organization.

In the literature, there are many studies examining the relationship between organizational exclusion and organizational commitment. A few of the previous studies are presented below in order to clearly reveal the predicted theoretical relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment discussed in this study:

Zheng et al (2016), in their study named *"Workplace ostracism and its negative outcomes: Psychological capital as a moderator"*, concluded that workplace ostracism was negatively related organizational commitment.

Rehman, Jalil, Hassan, Naseer, and Ikram (2021), in their study called *"Workplace spirituality and organizational citizenship behavior: A mediating and moderating role of organizational commitment and workplace ostracism"*, concluded that there was a negative relationship between workplace ostracism and organizational commitment.

Wang, Qin, Zhou (2021), in their study titled *"The effects of leaders' prosocial orientation on employees' organizational citizenship behavior - The roles of affective commitment and workplace ostracism"*, concluded that workplace ostracism was negatively related and affective organizational commitment.

Eickholt and Goodboy (2017), in their study named *"Investment model predictions of workplace ostracism on K–12 teachers' commitment to their schools and the profession of teaching"*, concluded that there was a negative relationship between wokplace ostracism and affective organizational commitment

Based on the theoretical explanations above and the case studies given, the research hypotheses were established as follows:

H1: Workplace ostracism is negatively related affective commitment

H2: Workplace ostracism is negatively related continuance commitment

H3: Workplace ostracism is negatively related normative commitment

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Sample

The sample of the study consists of a total of 148 academic staff working at Trabzon University in Trabzon. The descriptive statistical information regarding the sample is as follows: In terms of gender, 49.3% (n = 73) of the participants were female and 50.7% were male (n = 75). In terms of age, 14.9% (n = 22) of the participants were under 30 years old, 39.2% (n = 58) were in the 30-40 age range, and 45.9% (n = 68) were over 40 years old. Finally, in terms of tenure, 27% of respondents continue to serve for less than 5 years, 26.4% for 5-10 years, and 46.6% for more than 10 years.

3.2. Measures

Workplace Ostracism Scale: To measure the exclusion perceptions of the participants in our study, Ferris et al. (2008) "Workplace Ostracism Scale", which includes one dimension and 13 items, was used. This scale was graded using the 5-point Likert method in our study (1= Never; 5= Always). (Sample items: *"Others left the area when you entered"*, *"others ignored you at work"*).

Organizational Commitment Scale: In our study, Podsakoff et al.'s (1990) "Organizational Commitment Scale" was used to reveal the organizational citizenship behaviors of the participants. This scale consists of 24 items graded with a 5-point Likert method (1 = never; 5 = always). The scale has a 5-factor structure: Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Civic Virtue, Courtesy, Altruism. Conscientiousness questions are reverse coded. (Sample items: *"Attendance at work is above the norm"*, *"Tends to make "mountains out of molehills" (R)*, *"Keeps abreast of changes in the organization"*, *"Does not abuse the rights of others"*, *"Helps others who have been absent"*).

4. FINDINGS

4.1.Validity, Reliability and Normality

Confirmatory Factor and Cronbach's Alpha Analyzes were applied to prove the validity and reliability of the scales we used in our research. The findings obtained as a result of these analyzes are presented in Table 1:

Table 1. CFA and Cronbach's Alpha Results

Variables	CMIN/DF	IFI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	Cronbach's Alpha
Workplace Ostracism	1.90	.96	.96	.07	.05	.91
Organizational Commitment	1.77	.94	.94	.07	.07	.87
• *Affective Commitment*						.73
• *Continuance Commitment*						.74
• *Normative Commitment*						.84

According to Table 1, the construct validity of the workplace ostracism and organizational commitment scales has been provided and it has been concluded that both scales are reliable for this study.

The skewness and kurtosis coefficients were calculated to determine whether the data obtained in the study had a normal distribution. Since Kurtosis and Skewness values are considered to be normal when they are between -1.5 and +1.5 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013), it was determined that the data had a normal distribution according to the calculation findings.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Pearson correlation analysis was performed to determine the intercorrelations between research variables and the findings are presented in Table 2. Workplace ostracism was negatively related to affective commitment ($r = -.295, p < .01$), continuance commitment ($r = -.247, p < .01$) and normative commitment ($r = -.218, p < .01$).

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, coefficient alphas, and correlations among variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	1.51	.50	1						
2.Age	2.31	.72	.334**	1					
3. Tenure	2.20	.84	.231**	.644**	1				
4. Workplace Ostracism	1.52	.53	.029	.009	.056	1			
5. Affective Commitment	3.65	.83	.047	.230**	.061	-.295**	1		
6. Continuance Commitment	3.03	.75	.009	-.020	.002	-.247**	.196*	1	
7. Normative Commitment	2.88	.75	.080	.157	-.016	-.218**	.643**	.363**	1

** p < .01 , * p < .05

4.3. Hypotheses Testing

Three multiple regression models were established to question the effects of independent variables on dependent variables. At the same time, gender, age and tenure variables were included in the models established as control variables in order to reach a clearer judgment. The findings of the multiple regression analysis performed on these models are presented in Table 3:

Table 3. Results for testing multiple regression models

Variables	*Affective Commitment* Model 1	*Continuance Commitment* Model 2	*Normative Commitment* Model 3
1. Gender	-.023	.024	.041
2. Age	.320**	-.056	.263*
3. Tenure	-.124	.047	-.183
4. Workplace Ostracism	-.291***	-.250**	-.212**
F	6.361	2.418	3.694
R²	.151	.063	.094

*** p < .001 , ** p < .01 , * p < .05

As a result of the first multiple regression analysis, model 1 predicted for the affective commitment was found to be significant ($R^2 = .151$, $p < .001$). Age was found to positively affect the affective commitment ($\beta = .320$, $p < .01$). Workplace ostracism appeared to have a negative effect on the affective commitment ($\beta = -.291$, $p < .001$). According to this finding, hypothesis H1 was accepted.

The second multiple regression analysis showed that model 2 predicted for the continuance commitment was significant ($R^2 = .063$, $p < .05$). It was found that none of the control variables had a significant effect on the continuance commitment. It was concluded that workplace ostracism negatively affects the continuance commitment ($\beta = -.250$, $p < .01$). According to this finding, the H2 hypothesis was accepted.

Finally, as a result of the third multiple regression analysis, model 3 predicted for the normative commitment was also found to be significant ($R^2 = .094$, $p < .01$). Age was found to positively affect the normative commitment ($\beta = .263$, $p < .05$). Workplace ostracism was found to have a negative effect on the normative commitment ($\beta = -.212$, $p < .01$). According to this finding, hypothesis H3 was accepted.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, it was purposed to examine the effect of perceived workplace ostracism on organizational commitment. In order to achieve this purpose, a survey was conducted on a total of 148 academicians at Trabzon University in Trabzon, Türkiye. Based on the findings obtained after the necessary analyzes were made, the following conclusions were reached:

As a result of the correlation analysis, significant and negative relationships were found between workplace ostracism and affecitve commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment, which are sub-dimensions of organizational commitment. These findings provide clues about possible interactions between organizational exclusion and organizational commitment.

Three multiple regression models were established to test the research hypotheses. After the necessary analyzes were made, it was determined that all three proposed models were significant. The analysis findings showed that workplace exclusion had significant and negative effects on all three dimensions representing organizational commitment. Therefore, hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 were accepted. In other words, it was concluded that when

employees have a perception of exclusion in the workplace, this situation will negatively affect their organizational commitment levels in general. In this context, it can be said that the emotional ties of employees who feel excluded from their organizations are damaged, their intention to leave their current job in order to work in better conditions, their desire to work in other organizations will increase, and their respect for the culture and values of the organization will decrease. The results obtained in this study show similarities with previous studies in the literature (Erer, 2021; Uslukaya ve Demirtaş, 2020, Gkorezis et al. Panagiotou ve Theodorou, 2016; Hitlan et al, 2006).

The effects of ostracism in the workplace can be reduced if the relations between organizational members are strong. It can be said that processes such as ostracism are experienced intensely in structures where social ties are weakened, and these processes are experienced at a lower level in structures where social ties and solidarity are strong (Uslukaya & Demirtaş, 2020).

Based on the results obtained in this study, it can be said that it is very important for businesses and managers to develop close relationships with their employees through open communication, to create a working environment where they can freely express their feelings, thoughts, ideas and suggestions, and to identify all factors that may negatively affect organizational commitment. It is thought that if an organizational environment is provided for employees who do not feel the fear of being ignored or ignored by both their managers and colleagues, where they can talk about organizational issues and problems by sharing their ideas, thoughts and suggestions, their trust and commitment to their organizations may increase.

This study has some limitations. The findings obtained in this study only connect the research sample. It is thought that studies with a high number of participants in different sectors and occupational groups will reveal more detailed results. It is also suggested that popular topics such as organizational silence and employee cynicism should be integrated into this topic in future studies.

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