

## EDUCATION AND CORPORATE CULTURE RELATIONSHIP IN GARMENT COMPANIES

Hazır Giyim Firmalarında Eğitim ve Kurum Kültürü İlişkisi

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### ABSTRACT

Corporate culture is a very important factor that reveals the unique characteristics of a firm and distinguishes it from other companies by defining its organization, function, behavior and rules. The education level of its employees directly or indirectly affects and shapes the corporate culture. Apparel industry is one of the most important sectors in Turkey. While this sector plays a key role in both employment and continuity, the cultural development of companies directly affects employees' views on company loyalty through activities related to growth, continuity and branding. In this research, the garment industry executives operating in Turkey aimed to investigate the effect of corporate culture. For this purpose, 15 garment companies were contacted in Istanbul. Data were collected from 373 employees in managerial positions in these companies. The data obtained by face to face survey technique were analyzed with SPSS 22.0 program. The questionnaire used in the study consists of two parts. The first section includes demographic information. In the second part, there are questions created to determine the relationship between corporate culture and education. It was determined that the data did not conform to the normal distribution. Therefore, Mann Whitney U-Test and Kruskal Wallis H-Test techniques were used in statistical analysis. According to the results obtained from the research, most of the employees working in these companies are still associate degree and high school graduates. It is inevitable that undergraduate and graduate educated managers are brought to work here. Another result of the study is that the level of education does not affect the communication between managers, but is insufficient when evaluated in terms of institutionalization.

**Key words:** Education, Garment Businesses, Corporate Culture, Factor, Institutionalization.

### ÖZET

Kurum kültürü, bir firmanın kendine özgü özelliklerini ortaya çıkaran ve organizasyonunu, işlevini, davranışını ve kurallarını tanımlayarak onu diğer şirketlerden ayıran çok önemli bir faktördür. Çalışanlarının eğitim düzeyi, kurum kültürünü doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak etkiler ve şekillendirir. Hazır giyim sektörü, Türkiye'deki en önemli sektörlerden biridir. Bu sektör hem istihdamda hem de süreklilikte kilit rol oynarken, şirketlerin kültürel gelişimi büyüme, süreklilik ve markalaşma ile ilgili faaliyetlerle çalışanların şirket sadakati konusundaki görüşlerini doğrudan etkilemektedir. Bu araştırmada, Türkiye'de faaliyet gösteren hazır giyim sektörü yöneticilerinin kurum kültürüne etkisini incelemek amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaca doğrultusunda İstanbul'da 15 hazır giyim firması ile görüşüldü. Bu firmalarda 373 yönetici pozisyonunda çalışandan ait veriler toplanmıştır. Yüz yüze anket tekniği ile elde edilen veriler SPSS 22.0 programı ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmada kullanılan anket iki bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde demografik bilgiler yer almaktadır. İkinci bölümde ise kurum kültürü ve eğitim ilişkisini belirlemek amacıyla oluşturulan sorular bulunmaktadır. Verilerin normal dağılıma uymadığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu nedenle, istatistik analizlerde Mann Whitney U-Test ve Kruskal Wallis H-Test teknikleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlara göre bu firmalarda çalışanların çoğu hala ön lisans ve lise mezunlarıdır. Buralarda lisans ve lisansüstü eğitimi yöneticilerin iş başına getirilmesi kaçınılmaz olarak görülmektedir. Araştırmanın başka bir sonucu, eğitim düzeyinin yöneticiler arası iletişimi etkilemediği ancak kurumsallaşma açısından değerlendirildiğinde yetersiz olduğudur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Eğitim, Hazır Giyim İşletmeleri, Kurum Kültürü, Faktör, Kurumsallaşma.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is born from similar application of spoken language and symbols that are a historical, ideological, technologic and ecologic combination of values of a society formed on certain principles and that ensure a harmony of sentiments, ideas and judgements (Barutçugil, 2011). Like any society, corporations too have unique characteristics such as targets, aims, values, business perspectives and principles. Corporate or organizational culture on the other hand is composed of beliefs, ideas, understandings and spoken or unspoken rules in addition to symbols, common values and behaviors created by the founder or initial executives of the business and shared by the employees (Schein, 2006). In a business, this is demonstrated in the way of thinking that allows

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following a common path when working on a problem, and helps shape various elements such as how people dress and behave in the organization as well as employees' behaviors towards internal and external stakeholders. This unwritten, informal code of behavior rallies all employees around the same purpose with the same style of thinking to conduct business and aids to increase the functionality of the corporation while adding integrity. Assessed in a wide range of functions from stories and legends told about the organization, ceremonies, utilized symbols, and office decorations to the plans implemented and the leaders and heroes, the culture plays a critical role for the success and performance of a corporation (Uzoğlu, 2001). What distinguishes a corporation is the sum of all these characteristics. A study conducted by Ritchie & Thompson on American firms shows how influential these factors are on a corporation's success in the long run (Ritchie & Thompson, 1988). Downey too argues that a corporate identity shapes an organization's culture (Downey, 1986).

## 2. CORPORATE CULTURE

A corporate culture ensures the continuity of the business parallel to its targets. It defines the type of interactions of the business and contributes to the sense of organizational belonging. This allows an organizational identity to form and increases the devotion of employees to the nonvisible beliefs and values. The culture that connects the institution to the society also defines its success, significance and position. Uzoğlu, while mentioning the importance of how organizations present themselves to the society, lists the elements that allows this communication as "identity, culture and image" (Uzoğlu, 2001).

From the company's perspective, the corporate culture is the element that allows recognition of the business and that defines the type and level of relationships both with other businesses and individuals as well as its values. Culture, with this function connects the institution to the society. This is because the foundation of corporate culture is the social culture. What adds a tangible concept of corporate culture to this intangible notion is the employees that carry their own behaviors, assumptions and values to the organization (Akıncı Vural, 2003). Hence, the culture of employees shapes the culture of the corporation (Schein, 2006).

According to Root who analyzed the effect of a strong corporate culture on the development of the business, each position and the future of a business, whether during its establishment or advancement phase, can only develop by the interaction of its culture and internal control (Root, 1998). In this way, a strong corporate culture brings about success (Çakar, Yıldız, & Dur, 2010; Lim, 1995). And this success can only be achieved by good internal communication. Börü states the significance of communication: "Communication is much more than conveying words" (Börü, 2007). Businesses with strong corporate culture have value adding and bounding visible and nonvisible determinants.

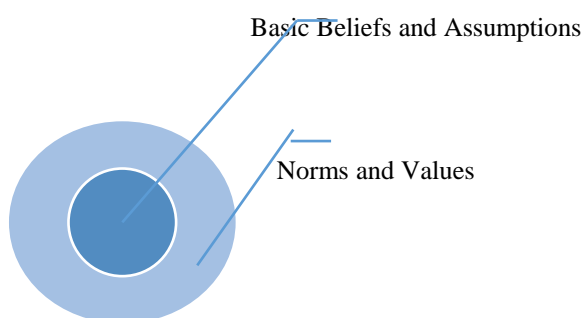


Figure 1. Nonvisible Determinants

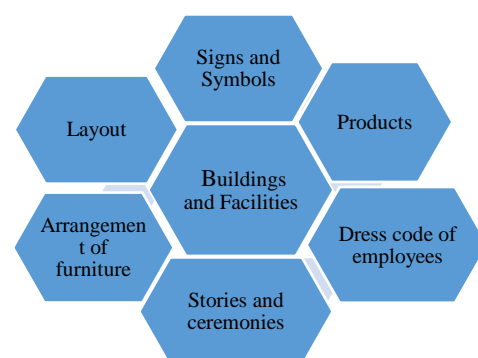


Figure 2. Visible Determinants

The values of corporate culture and its norm system form the foundation of a corporate identity. In other words, nonvisible determinants (Figure 1) is the basis of a culture and composed of norm and values that include basic beliefs and assumptions containing commonly accepted rights and wrongs, and types of behavior, the criteria for right and wrong, the importance levels of employees, targets, standards as well as internal social norms. The visible determinants (Figure 2) are all other elements. According to Hofstede, corporate culture has layers composed of symbols, heroes, rituals and values (Hofstede, 1980; Sørnes, Stephens, Sætre, & Browning, 2004). Pfister too talks about how the degree of effect of environmental factors on the culture can be grouped into opening cultural drivers and closing cultural drivers (Pfister & Hartmann, 2011). A corporation should develop a culture that is compatible with the message they want to convey. If we are talking about a corporation with favorable image, then it is also possible to talk about a positive corporate culture. However, if we are talking about a strict and bureaucracy-dominant corporate culture, it would be unrealistic to expect a corporate identity and positive image (Okay, 2002).

When literature on corporate or organization culture is reviewed, there are multi-dimensional and widely analyzed cultural dimensions. And when these dimensions are explored, usually the definitions that correlate organizational activities strike the attention (Morrison, Smit, & Brown, 2006). For instance, the CEO of CINTAS located in USA, Richard T. Farmer defines the activities they implemented and turned into culture as “Culture of Respect (Customers are kings), Culture of Leadership, Culture of Excellency and Culture of Success” (Richard, 2005). In these definitions, perceiving improvement and change as corporate culture rather than the direction of development, adopting and internalizing this notion and later sharing it by means of implementation to ensure continuity is important and should be promoted. This can only be achieved through employees. In general, it is possible to talk about 4 types of corporate culture. These are Klan Culture, Market Culture, Hierarchy Culture and Adhocracy Culture (Coomer, 2007).

Human resources department plays a huge role in ensuring the embracing of the corporate culture by the employees. During orientation training where new recruits learn about their jobs and responsibilities, the corporation’s vision, mission, target and values, even its norms should be explained to ensure their adoption (Bingöl, 2010). According to Vural, the celebrations, ceremonies and rituals presented to the employees about the firm helps employees to commit and trust the company in the long run in addition to reducing their anxiety and send messages to external audiences (Akıncı Vural, 2003). Besides this, the environmental factor of course should not be forgotten. Environment contains all physical and social factors outside the institution. Demographic structure, economic, political and technological conditions, geographic location and culture are among these factors (Koçel, 2001).

In literature, there are studies conducted on how a corporate culture is shaped and developed by the interaction with internal control, and the recent studies focus more on this topic (Ertuğrul, 2013). The studies that correlate the positive influence of internal control on corporate culture also mention the significance of social relations and communication and emphasize how loyalty and mutual trust strengthen the corporate culture (Tüm & Reyhanoğlu, 2015). When we classify the corporations as public and private, it is evident that the development of the culture exhibits variation in terms of cultural dimensions (Harun, 2008). There are also a number of studies that analyze the opinions of college students about their university in terms of its image. Students of private universities have higher corporate culture perception and image indicators because of the facilities offered to these students (Şişli & Sevinç, 2013).

In this study, the effect of education level of low-level managers of 15 firms operating in Istanbul on corporate culture was investigated and evaluated. Exploring the effect of employees’ education levels on corporate culture, this study can become an essential source on the effect of education on culture for both the business world and literature while playing an important role for future studies on this subject.

### 3. METHOD AND FINDINGS

#### 3.1. Population and Sample

The main purpose of this study is to determine whether the development of corporate culture is affected by the education level of managers working in garment industry - a branch of textile industry which holds an important position in our country. In this context, garment businesses operating in Istanbul province universe were surveyed. The data were obtained from people working in 373 managerial positions in 15 companies. The data obtained were analyzed using the SPSS 22.0 package program.

#### 3.2. Methodology

The questions of the questionnaire, which is a data collection tool, were created by the researchers. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part includes questions about the demographic information of the participants, and the second part includes questions about measuring the relationship between corporate culture and education. The questionnaire used in the study was collected with face-to-face technique by going to the companies.

In the second part, reliability analysis of the scale was made. The commonly used Cronbach Alpha method was used for this. According to this; A reliability coefficient of 0.80-1.00 indicates a very reliable scale (Alpar, 2010). The reliability coefficient of the scale we used in our study was found to be 0.92. Therefore, it can be said that our research is very reliable.

Permission was obtained from the ethics committee of a state university for this study (14/09/2020 and 2020-5). The survey participants were informed about the purpose and subject of the study before the application.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov goodness of fit test was performed to determine the compatibility of the data obtained from the questionnaire with normal distribution. It was determined that our data did not conform to normal distribution (Kolmogorov-Smirnov  $Z = 0.975$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). For this reason, Mann Whitney-U test and Kuskal Wallis –H tests, which are non-parametric tests, were used in the study.

#### 3.3. Demographic Variables

The findings on respondents' demographic relations are shown in Table 1. The survey was conducted with 373 people, and 340 of them were assessed following a close inspection. Some of the surveys were disregarded because of incomplete or missing answers.

When the demographic characteristics of the respondents are examined, in the variable: company type, respondents either work in manufacturing (65.58%) or contract manufacturing (34.41%). When the gender variable is considered, the respondents are proportionally distributed among female variables (41.76%) and male variables (58.23%). In age variable, the distribution is as follows: (38.23%) 18-28 years of age, (36.17%) 29 - 39 years, (24.11%) 40-50 years and (1.7%) 51 years and older. Majority of the respondents are composed of high school and college graduates.

Table I. Demographic Characteristics of the Responders

Variable		f	%	Variable	f	%	
Company	Manufacturing	223	65.58	Gender	Female	142	41.76
	Contract manufacturing	117	34.41		Male	198	58.23
Age	18-28	130	38.23	Education	Primary school	32	9.41
	29-39	123	36.17		High school	123	36.17
	40-50	82	24.10		Associate degree	66	19.41
	51 and older	5	1.47		Bachelor's degree	109	32.05
				Other	10	2.94	
<b>Total</b>		<b>340</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100</b>	

Another significant factor in formation of corporate culture, uninterrupted duration of employment of surveyed employees is given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Uninterrupted Employment Duration of Employees in the Same Company

Variable		f	%
Uninterrupted employment duration	0-2 Years	139	40.88
	2-5 Years	115	33.82
	5-10 Years	57	16.76
	10 Years and more	29	7.05
<b>Total</b>		340	100

When the survey responses were assessed, approximately 75% of the responders were found to be in the short-term employment duration called circulation period. Long-term employment, which is required for the formation and sustaining a culture, is only valid for 23% of the population. In fact, even this finding alone suggests that there are difficulties in institutionalization in the garment industry.

### 3.4. Education Variables

The survey used contained questions on forming and sustaining a corporate culture, the targets and policy of the institution, the quality of customer service, internal communication and interaction, sharing, career planning, internal training and competency, then the data obtained was assessed by implementing Kruskal Wallis-H test. For identifying the affecting variables, Mann-Whitney U test was performed.

**Table 3.** Sharing Information on Company's Target and Projects with Employees Based on Their Education Levels Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

Level of Education	N	Mean Rank	s.d.	$\chi^2$	p
Primary school	32	230.12			
High school	123	178.65			
Associate degree	66	180.71			
Bachelor's degree	109	164.47	4	11.19	0.024
Other	10	169.31			
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>				

When Table 3 is analyzed, there is a significant variation in the statements on communication and development of company's targets and projects [ $\chi^2 = 11.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine which education level caused this variation. According to the results, primary school graduates expressed that they had more information about the targets and projects, and they were consulted on development of these projects. This may be because lower level employees are more involved with the application and technical parts of a project rather than the reluctance of the higher educated personnel who are project managers to share these projects with each other.

**Table 4.** Efforts Towards Increasing the Quality of Customer Service Based on the Education Level Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

Level of Education	N	Mean Rank	s.d.	$\chi^2$	p
Primary school	32	222.75			
High school	123	193.66			
Associate degree	66	151.16			
Bachelor's degree	109	168.17	4	17.68	0.001
Other	10	163.06			
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>				

When Table 4 is analyzed, there is a significant variation in the statements on efforts towards increasing the customer service quality [ $\chi^2 = 17.68$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine which education level caused this variation. According to the results, employees with primary school and high school degrees state that there are efforts for the benefit of customers and consider their companies' efforts adequate. Considering the fact that new trends are more closely followed as the education level increases, employees with higher education consider these efforts inadequate.

Table 5. Presence of Good and Effective Communication Between the Organization's Employees Based on Their Education Levels Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

Level of Education	N	Mean Rank	s.d.	$\chi^2$	p
Primary school	32	230.12			
High school	123	167.40			
Associate degree	66	172.27	4	10.63	0.031
Bachelor's degree	109	178.99			
Other	10	182.62			
Total	340				

When Table 5 is analyzed, there is a significant variation in the statements on good and effective communication between the company's employees [ $\chi^2 = 10.63$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine which education level caused this variation. According to the results, primary school graduates believe that there is good and effective communication and interaction between the company's employees. Furthermore, the same participants also think that their managers are the most knowledgeable person in the firm. This indicates that the higher the education level, more challenging it is for employees to communicate with other personnel with similar rank. Educated personnel who could also be called project coordinators might be experiencing communication problems due to competitive psychology

Table 6. Findings on preferring internal verbal communication over written communication based on the education level Kruskal Wallis-H test results

Level of Education	N	Mean Rank	s.d.	$\chi^2$	p
Primary school	32	183.39			
High school	123	186.80			
Associate degree	66	156.02	4	9.77	0.044
Bachelor's degree	109	187.11			
Other	10	133.62			
Total	340				

When Table 6 is analyzed, there is a significant variation in the statements on findings on preferring internal verbal communication over written communication [ $\chi^2 = 9.77$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine which education level caused this variation. According to this, it is evident that employees with high school and bachelor's degrees prefer verbal communication instead of a written one. As the most important characteristic of institutionalization and playing a critical role in conveying it to other employee communities, the limited use of written communication can be considered a weakening factor in forming a culture.

Table 7. Findings on Sharing Information Between Managers and Other Employees Based on Their Education Levels Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

Level of Education	N	Mean Rank	s.d.	$\chi^2$	p
Primary school	32	142.45			
High school	123	163.77			
Associate degree	66	185.42	4	12.65	0.013
Bachelor's degree	109	200.20			
Other	10	173.91			
Total	340				

When Table 7 is analyzed, there is a significant variation in the statements on information sharing between the managers and other employees [ $\chi^2 = 12.65$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine which education level caused this variation. According to the results, employees with bachelor's degrees state that they are more knowledgeable than other graduates and they share information sufficiently with other employees.

Table 8. Findings on Presence of Delegation of Duties Between Employees

Level of Education	N	Mean Rank	s.d.	$\chi^2$	p
Primary school	32	181.39			
High school	123	159.47			
Associate degree	66	168.11			
Bachelor's degree	109	202.82	4	12.26	0.015
Other	10	181.06			
Total	340				

When Table 8 is analyzed, there is a significant variation in statements on delegation of duties between employees and hierarchy [ $\chi^2 = 12.65$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine which education level caused this variation. According to the results, employees with bachelor's degrees state that there is a competent but insufficient delegation in ensuring hierarchical order compared to other types of graduates. This conclusion indicates that especially educated persons are dissatisfied with their position in life. This may be one of the underlying reasons of turnover.

Table 9. Effective Use of Materials and Equipment Necessary for Internal Communication Based on the Education Level Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

Level of Education	N	Mean Rank	s.d.	$\chi^2$	p
Primary school	32	232.89			
High school	123	177.07			
Associate degree	66	175.90			
Bachelor's degree	109	171.56	4	12.80	0.012
Other	10	143.00			
Total	340				

When Table 9 is analyzed, there is a significant variation in the statements on effective use of materials and equipment necessary for internal communication [ $\chi^2 = 12.80$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine which education level caused this variation. According to this, employees with primary school education consider the use of materials, tools and equipment necessary for internal communication sufficient. Higher educated employees on the other hand think that the use of these is insufficient.

Table 10. There is Support for Employees in Identifying Internal Career Objectives Based on the Education Level Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

Level of Education	N	Mean Rank	s.d.	$\chi^2$	p
Primary school	32	230.66			
High school	123	161.16			
Associate degree	66	169.51			
Bachelor's degree	109	184.72	4	15.39	0.004
Other	10	198.31			
Total	340				

When Table 10 is analyzed, there is a significant variation in the statements on setting internal career objectives [ $\chi^2 = 15.39$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine which education level caused this variation. According to the results, primary school graduates believe that no matter how

much effort they make, they will not be able to benefit from advancement opportunities in the organization and the term of employment is insufficient for career objectives. This finding indicates the importance of education in forming a corporate culture in addition to career objectives.

Table 11. There are on-the-job Trainings and Employee Development Programs Based on Education Level Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

Level of Education	N	Mean Rank	s.d.	$\chi^2$	p
Primary school	32	207.19			
High school	123	160.18			
Associate degree	66	164.66	4	12.73	0.013
Bachelor's degree	109	198.39			
Other	10	166.50			
Total	340				

When Table 11 is analyzed, there is a significant variation in statements on receiving on-the-job trainings and employee development programs [ $\chi^2 = 12.73$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine which education level caused this variation. According to the results, primary school and college graduates are benefiting more from on-the-job training programs. Enlisting primary school graduates to these programs to gain competence and college graduates to gain vision is inevitable for companies.

Table 12. Competence is Provided to Work Positions According to the Education Level Kruskal Wallis-H Test Results

Level of Education	N	Mean Rank	s.d.	$\chi^2$	p
Primary school	32	212.56			
High school	123	193.74			
Associate degree	66	162.74	4	11.24	0.024
Bachelor's degree	109	163.77			
Other	10	167.78			
Total	340				

When Table 12 is analyzed, there is a significant variation in statements on findings related to the competences in work positions [ $\chi^2 = 11.24$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine which education level caused this variation. According to this, participants with primary school and high school degrees claim that they have more job skills and they do not work at jobs that match their talents. Some of the jobs requiring higher levels of education are causing job dissatisfaction in this kind of employees.

#### 4. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Culture is a set of values that encompass a society and incorporate distinguishing elements. A corporate culture, in a similar manner, is a structure where companies create their beliefs and identities with elements including own values, norms and symbols shaped by the culture of its employees. A corporate culture is highly critical in continuity and sustainability of companies because it also shapes the society's perspective towards that company.

This study aims to analyze the corporate culture activities of garment companies operating in Istanbul province in terms of education levels. Garment industry has a wide ranging employee profile. As a labor intensive sector and considered an option for employment by lower and middle class workers, the creation of corporate culture in this sector is highly influenced from external factors. Because the turnover is high due to termination of employment contracts by either the firm or the employee caused by the government policies, rapidly changing exchange rates, export-import opportunities or problems, continuity and sustainability as the most essential factors for creation of a culture are impeded.

When the research findings are analyzed, we see that the 65% of the participating companies are manufacturing firms. And majority of the employees are high school (36.17%) and college



(32.05%) graduates. When the age group of the survey participants is reviewed, it is encouraging to see 74.4% are between 18 and 29 years of age. Increasing the duration of compulsory primary education to 8 years as a state policy triggers the teenagers' desire to continue education with middle school followed by high school and college, and this in turn increases the education profile of young population. However, the fact that 74.7% of the employees being employed only for a short duration of 0-5 years negatively affects the most important element in creating a culture – duration. These new recruits are just beginning to communicate with the company, and it is sad that their employment is terminated at this very productive time for communication.

It is now inevitable for companies to create corporate hierarchies for this educated new generation. This situation causes long-term self-taught employees of the sector not be able to find a place in the upper management positions in new formations. This may be due to the fact that businesses that are striving to succeed in export or create or develop their own brand prefer to work with multilingual personnel who can work in upper management, easily prepare reports and even participate in stakeholder programs. As a result, recruiting educated personnel to these positions is inevitable. For that reason primary school and high school graduates, even associate degree holders are facing challenges about career objectives and stating that they do not see advancement opportunities despite their effort. This is in fact only a diploma-related problem. In order to communicate corporate culture and for stability, internal reporting and communication should be in written form. In a similar fashion, college and higher graduates are considered more apt in using any software developed for the firm. Primary school graduates on the other hand prefer verbal communication, and even consider reporting activities that actually do not exist sufficient.

As a result, turnover issues in garment businesses are yet to resolve. But the profiles of new recruits indicate a higher education level. This may in time contribute positively in branding and institutionalization with educated personnel and help overcome problems.

This study is first of its kind in terms of education profiles of employees in institutionalization of garment industry as a sector providing significant employment opportunities in our country. From this perspective, it sure will make a contribution to the literature and hopefully shed light to future studies.

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