

## **The Relationship among Perceived Organizational Support, Job Satisfaction, and Alienation: An Empirical Study on Academicians**

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### **Abstract**

*Worker's perception of being supported by organization may lead for them to feel safe, display positive attitude toward organization and even see themselves as part of the organization. On the other hand, lack of support that workers expect from job environment and the lack of the necessary job satisfaction may lead them to display emotional behaviors and, over time, fatigue, dissatisfaction and depending on those, alienation may emerge. In this context of study, the relationships between the perception of organizational support, job satisfaction, and alienation of academic staff in a state university in Turkey were tried to reveal. In this study, data from 269 academic staff were analyzed. In the results of those analysis, it was determined that there is positive relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction, negative relationship between perceived organizational support and alienation, a negative relationship between job satisfaction and alienation. Those relationships are statistically significant.*

**Keywords:** Perceived Organizational Support, Job Satisfaction, Alienation, Academicians.

### **1. Introduction**

One of the most important differences of humans from other factors of production is that human is a psychological being. Accordingly, the things they feel and perceive have a significant role in various behaviors (satisfaction, performance, commitment, identification, alienation etc.) in organization. Perception can be defined as that individual's getting information about the events and behavior around themselves and the process of interpretation of that information (Erdoğan, 1996:2). Perceptions vary among individuals because they are influenced of individual's life styles, cultures, belief systems, and personal characteristics. Therefore, while the practices (organizational support, manager support etc.) that are perceived positively cause positive outcomes (job satisfaction, increase in performance and commitment etc.), the negative perceptions cause undesirable outcomes (lack of job satisfaction, alienation, decrease in performance etc.).

Worker's perception of being supported by organization may lead for them to feel safe, display positive attitude toward organization and even see themselves as part of the organization. Organizational support, in this context, substitutes the place of the management literature, an important term which examines the relationship between the worker and the organization and reveals the perception of worker about the institution. Perceived organizational support, in this context, is explained as "the developed perceptions that is related to the degree of being known of the value that workers contribute to the organization and cared of the happiness workers has" (Ring, 2011: 157). While the height of this perception of support causes to be on display of attitude and practices that increase their happiness, productivity and job satisfaction (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, Sowe, 1986: 501), the lack of this perception or low level of this perception may affect the attitude of the worker negatively towards the job and the organization.

Generally, job satisfaction express the pleasure employee has towards his work (Hackman and Oldham, 1975:160). Therefore, when the job satisfaction is defined, how much the individual needs, values, and expectation are supplied by organization should be taken into consideration.

In this context, perceived organizational support can be accepted as a very important premise in terms of job satisfaction. On the other hand, “alienation,” which is stated as individuals cannot feel them as a whole and have actions that causes divisions in their consciousness (Bonjean and Grimes, 1970:366), is a result of the events, attitudes, and perceptions that occurred in organization.

In this study, the relationship between the terms that perception of organizational support, job satisfaction and alienation are tried to be tested on academicians. In this context, firstly, a literature review related with organizational support and alienation terms will be executed in a conceptual framework. In the practice part of the study, data obtained from academicians from a state university will be used to test the hypothesis that was formed basing on the literature.

## **2. Conceptual Framework**

### **2.1. Perceived Organizational Support**

Organizational support is essentially based on “Social Exchange Theory” (Blau, 1964) and “Reciprocity Theory” (Gouldner, 1960). There is a search for reciprocal balance between organizations and the employee (Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasola and Lynech, 1998) and organizational support have importance in the establishment of that balance (Eisenberger et al, 1986:503). In the theory of social exchange, it is claimed that the person who was done a favour will respond to that favour when conditions are suitable (Blau, 1964). So, when an individual feel as supported and cared in a job environment, that individual may work as devoted and with high performance and he/she may even feel a sense of belonging to that organization in response to the feelings before. Perceived organizational support, in this context, is defined as whole behaviour and attitude that employee develops towards the organization depending on the care organization give to that employee (Meyer, Allen and Gellatly, 1990). Workers think that managers appreciate the work and efforts they performed and they also think that managers care themselves (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski and Rhoades, 2002).

The formation of the perception of organizational support in employees depends on the conformity, financial and career support of the organization (Yılmaz and Görmüş, 2012: 4489). Furthermore, Rhoades, Eisenberger et al (2002: 699) mention 4 important premises, which are “organizational justice”, “managerial support”, “organizational rewards and working conditions” and “worker characteristics”, for the perception of the organizational support. However, it is stated if organization presents the career opportunities, rewards, and training conditions voluntarily rather than because of the external pressures, that will strengthen the perceived organizational support (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli and Lynch, 1997).

In the literature, it is emphasized that perceived organizational support causes positive results like high organizational commitment, increase in job satisfaction, increase in performance, organizational citizenship behaviour and the decrease in the intention of leaving the employment (Eisenberger, Fasola and Lamastro-Davis, 1990; Settoon, Bennett and Liden, 1996; Wayne, Shore and Liden 1997; Moorman, Blakely and Niehof, 1998; Rhodes and Eisenberger, 2002). Besides, it is alleged that perceived organizational support arouses a feeling of obligation in employees to support their organizations in a positive way (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002), and being effective in formation of organizational identification by increasing the sense of belonging (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

### **2.2. Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction expresses the well being of the employee in mentally and physically (Sevimli and İşcan, 2005: 56). There are different definitions of the term “job satisfaction” as it has been embraced in many studies since 1990s (Handsome, 2009: 39). We can define job satisfaction as the combination of the psychological, physiological and environmental factors that causes workers’ to be pleased from their jobs (Tanner, 2007: 25), positive emotional situation workers have when they evaluate their works and work experiences (Glisson and Durick, 1988: 64-65), the degree of liking the work workers do (Çetin, 2011: 74). Davis (1982) indicates that job satisfaction actualizes when the features of the work and the wishes of workers match with each other (Özpehlivan and Acar, 2015: 284).

Delightedness towards work shows job satisfaction and the displeasure towards job shows the lack of job satisfaction (Dinler, 2010: 11). Hence, the emotional reactions workers show in organization to their works can be negative or positive.

While Luthans treats the aspects of the job satisfaction in 4 groups as the nature of the work, wage, the possibility of promotion, administration and co-workers (Tella, Ayeni and Popoola, 2007: 5), Spector examines that in nine aspects as wage, promotion, administrators, additional opportunities, possible rewards, working conditions, co-workers, nature of the work and communication (Yelboğa, 2009). King, Murray and Atkinson (1982) and Simon (1996), on the other hand, approaches with two aspects as the individual related factors and the factors originating from the work itself. The individual related factors involves both the demographic features (age, gender, education, marital status etc.) of employee, and the personality and experience while the factors originating from the work itself involves the wage, working conditions, the difficulty level of work, job security, the possibility of promotion, reward system and the degree of the engagement to the decisions (Akkoç, Çalışkan and Turunç, 2012: 107). Job satisfaction may be affected from job-family balance/imbalance besides the organizational support within the organization, the support of lead manager, the leader-member interaction, organizational conflict, job stress, charges and rewarding.

It is stated that using new techniques in business life and reaching the quality objectives increase the intrinsic satisfaction of worker while the gains like wage in return to their work, job security etc. increase the exterior satisfaction (Arisoy, 2007: 75). In this context, it can be said that job satisfaction has an importance for organizations that increasing gradually. Besides the benefits of job satisfaction for business as organizational commitment, performance, loyalty, and emergence of confidence, it is inevitable that the lack of job satisfaction causes the lack of collaboration, stress, exhaustion, alienation, desire for leaving of employment and ineffectiveness.

In literature, it is observed that there is a negative relationship between job satisfaction, stress and the desire for leaving of employment (Clugston, 2000: 483; Gül, Oktay and Gökçe, 2008: 6; Wong, 2007: 104; Hazel, 2010: 376; Gibson, 2011: 60) while it is emphasized that there are significant relationships between the job satisfaction and the performance (Laffaldano and Muchinsky, 1985: 256-261; Shore and Martin, 1989: 633; Yousef, 2000: 15; Ceylan and Ulutürk, 2006: 53; Gül et al, 2008:6).

### **2.3. Alienation**

Blauner (1964) defines alienation as the situation of “Job ‘slack of providing the conditions and environments that reveals the individuals values as being humans such as autonomy, responsibility, social interaction and self-realization” (Kaya, Serçeoğlu, 2013:320). Hegel (1991) used alienation as the distinction of physical and spiritual existence in terms of giving up the independent existence by “I”s being surrounded and becoming distant with personality. Alienation is also stated as “the social reality that emerges from the decomposed relationships between subject, nature and other subjects, and the externalization of physical objects” (Kulak, 2011: 38). As for Marx (2010), he uses the term alienation to represent the inconformity between the nature of job role and the human nature. This inconformity causes secession of the work by losing the control over the capacity of self-expression within the existing work environment and emergence of the lack of control over work (Mendoza and Lara, 2007).

Alienation can be approached with for aspects as weakness, meaninglessness, isolatedness and depersonalisation (Blauner 1964: 18-26). According to that approach, in the situation of the lack of control of employee over the work, the weakness aspect emerges. Meaninglessness is that employee’s cannot attach any meaning to the work he/she is doing. The aspect of isolatedness reveals itself as not being able to identify with organization and remain insensitive to the organization’s goals while the depersonalisation is defined as employees cannot express themselves and cannot find and opportunity to self-realization because their work do not let them so (Kaya, Serçeoğlu, 2013:320).

Employee’s displaying the emotional behaviours that are not real, different than their true feelings, may cause “inconformity”, “exhaustion”, “dissatisfaction” and, by basing on those, alienation to work (Kaya, Serçeoğlu, 2013:314). Employee’s not being able to improve their creative ability may also be one of the reasons for them to alienate to their work (Shin, 2009:9). The results of alienations of employees can be counted as tearing the connection of work in cognitive and emotionally (Nair and Vohra, 2010), emotional exhaustion (Shantz, Alfesb and Truss, 2012), the lack of job satisfaction (Ulusoy, 1988; Turan and Parsak, 2011), not able to identify with the job (Efraty, Siryg and Claiborne, 1991) and organizational insecurity (Özbek, 2011).

### **3. Research**

#### **3.1. Research Objectives and Hypotheses**

Nowadays, the most important problem of job environments is that not being able to perceive the need of employees and provide the support to meet the expectations of employees in both administrative and organizational terms. Especially in some countries (for example Turkey) being an academician means both de facto educating students with theory and/or application lectures, and also improving themselves in order to be advance in their career. Therefore, it is very important for academicians to feel being supported by their organizations in the countries that those practices can be applied to. When academicians think that they receive the return of their self-sacrificing work, their performance increase and they also enjoy working. On the other hand, a struggle that remain unreturned may cause dissatisfaction, decrease in performance and also may lead the individual become distant from the job environment.

In this context, the objective of this study is to test the relationship between the terms organizational support, job satisfaction, alienation that is thought to be connected with each other theoretically on the academicians from a state university. For this reason, 3 hypotheses that set out below were formed and will be tested.

#### **Research Hypotheses**

H1: Perception of Organizational Support has a significant and positive effect in Job Satisfaction.

H2: Organizational Support has a significant and negative effect on Alienation.

H3: Alienation has a significant and negative effect on Job Satisfaction.

#### **3.2. Population and Data Collection Tool**

Study was carried out in a state university in Turkey. Academic staff of the university was accepted as population. The link that involves the survey was sent to the email addresses which were reached by examining the registered emails on the website of the university. 275 of those survey forms answered, however, due to the deficiencies in some forms, 6 forms were taken out of the study and analyses were made with 269 surveys.

Survey that is structured as a data collection tool was used in the study. The first part of the survey form includes information about demographic features. The second part is composed of 21 statements that were constituted by the scales of organizational support, job satisfaction and the alienation. The scale that is used for measuring the perceived organizational support is the one-dimensional scale that composed of 8 statements and created by Eisenberger et al (1986). Scale's validity and reliability were tested in many studies (Tseng and Lee, 2009; Akkoç et al, 2012: 119-120). The scale that was reformed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951), which is one-dimensional, and composed of 5 statements, was used in order to measure the job satisfaction. Finally, the scale of alienation, which was reformed by Hirschfeld and Field (2000:792), was one-dimensional and has 8 entries. In the survey questions, 5-pointlikert scale was used. In the survey form, statements of which "1: Absolutely Disagree", "2: Disagree", "3: Neutral", "4: Agree" and "5: Absolutely Agree" were in.

#### **3.3. Demographic Features Regarding to the Research**

46,5 % of the participants of the research was female, 53,5% male, and 70% married and 29,4% were single. When average of age was examined, it was seen that 20,8% was between 23-30, 39,5% between 31-40, 30,5% between 41-50 and 9,2% between 51-62. When the educational background was examined, 7,1% Undergraduate, 37,9% Graduate, 55% had doctor's degree. Besides, 6,3% was Prof. Dr.; 9,3% was Assoc. Prof. Dr.; 22,3% was Assistant Professor, 29,4% was teaching assistant, 6,3% was teaching assistant with PhD, 12,3% was research assistant, 5,2% was research assistant with PhD, 1,5% was expert, 2,7% was specialist, 5,9% was lecturer, 0,7% was lecturer with PhD. While 27,5% of the participants had the administrative function, 72,5% of them had no administrative function. 31% of the participants would like to do another job if they could while 67,7% of them was happy with the current condition and rather stay their job. Besides, 45,7% of them satisfied from the administration support, 11,5% of them found that support insufficient and 42,8% of them found the support partially enough.

#### **3.4. Analysis Results**

In the result of the confirmatory factor analysis that was done to test the convenience of 3 separate scales that were used in this study, it was seen that factor loads for each of the 3 scales (POS= ,966; JS= ,897 and A= ,854) were above the generally accepted value, 0,70.

According to those values, it can be said that dataset was convenience for factor analysis (Kalaycı, 2010: 323). To test the convenience of factors, criteria of the sufficiency of the sample for KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) (OS= ,952; JS= ,881 and A= ,876), and the results for Barlett test ( $p= .000$ ) was found as significant. Besides, the explained variance was tested as perceived organizational support was 80,69%, job satisfaction was 71,45% and alienation was 50,15%.

### **Analysis of Correlation and Test of Hypotheses**

Correlation analysis reveals the direction and the function of the relationship between variances. If the coefficient of the correlation is close to -1 the existence of a negative relationship, if that coefficient is close to +1, then, the existence of a positive relationship that we can talk about. Besides, if the coefficient of the correlation is between “0-0,3” there is a low, between “0,3-0,7” there is a middle and if between “0,7-1” there is a strong relationship that we can talk about (Saruhan and Özdemirci, 2011: 184; Saruhan and Yıldız, 2009:339). According to the completed correlation analysis results, it was determined that there are statistically significant relations between variables. There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction, but negative relationship between perceived organizational support and alienation with 0,01 level of significance. It was determined that there is also a negative relationship between job satisfaction and alienation. Each three relationship has the middle level of strength. The mean and standard deviation values of those variables are given in Table 2.

In the study, the results of regression analysis to test three alleged hypotheses were given at Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5. Firstly, hypothesis that tries to test the relationship between the perceived organizational support and job satisfaction, “H1: Perception of Organizational Support has a significant and positive effect in Job Satisfaction”, was tested and the results are shown at Table 3. According to the  $p$  value ( $p=0,000$ ) that shows whether the perceived organizational support has a significant effect on job satisfaction or not, one can talk about a significant and positive (Beta= ,398) relationship. In this case, with the attained results, it can be said that Hypothesis 1 is accepted. There are many studies in literature that examine the relationship between the perceived organizational support and the job satisfaction. Eisenberger et al. (1997:812-820); Behson (2002:61); Hochwarter, Kaçmar, Perrewe and Johnson (2003: 450); Zumrah and Boyle (2015:244) and Ahmed and Nawaz, (2015:874) revealed that there is a positive and strong relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction. Therefore, it can be observed that the outcomes from the result of the regression analysis that tested the H1 hypothesis are supported by the literature.

In order to test the relationship between the perceived organizational support and alienation, hypothesis of “H2: Organizational Support has a significant and negative effect on Alienation” was tested and the results are given at the Table 4. It can be seen that perceived organizational support has a significant effect on alienation. According to the regression results, we can say that  $P$  value is significant at 0,000 level and we can also say that there exists a negative (Beta=-,400) relationship. In this case, one can say that, with those outcomes, Hypothesis 2 is accepted and therefore there is a negative relationship between organizational support and alienation. In literature, in the studies that examines the relationship between the perceived organizational support and alienation by Taştan, İşçi and Arslan (2014:132) and Tanrıverdi and Kılıç (2016:13), it was stated that there was determined a negative, middle strong effect. The studies in the literature also emphasizes that perceived organizational support is effective on the organizational identification (Özdemir, 2010:244), the problems of employees about not being able to identify themselves with their organizations causes alienation (Halbesleben and Clark, 2010: 536) and correspondingly, the supportive administrations reduces the alienation (Banai and Reisel, 2007:471). Another literature that supports the outcomes of this study belongs to Chuan and Lo (2004:133) and is about that organizational support lead employees feel less lonely and this situation may also affects alienation negatively.

The regression results of hypothesis, “H3: Alienation has a significant and negative effect on Job Satisfaction”, that is formed to test the relationship between alienation and job satisfaction is given at Table 5. It is shown that alienation has a significant effect on job satisfaction. The  $p$  value's, which shows the result of the relationship, being at the level of 0,000 means there is a significant relationship, and Beta=-,606 means that relationship is negative. Those attained results show that Hypothesis 3 is also accepted. That relationship which was determined to be at middle strength is being supported by some studies (Turan and Parsak, 2011; Uysaler, 2010: 61; Parsak, 2010; Yalçın and Koyuncu, 2014: 92) from the past. Those studies emphasize that when the job satisfaction increases, the alienation decreases and when the job satisfaction decrease, the alienation increases.

Furthermore, Sayers (2009:24) and Aiken and Hage (1966: 497), in their study, remarked that alienation is not only the disappointment that comes from not being able to realize the occupational norms, but also is a reflection of the disappointment that related to career and occupational improvement. In this context, if especially the academic staff do not feel themselves belong to their universities or their units (become alienated), one can say that problems will emerge first in their career improvement and then, in their organizational performance. The evaluation of hypotheses tests in the study is shown at Table 6, collectively. In this case, each three hypotheses that were formed by basing on the literature were accepted by testing on academicians from a public university.

#### **4. Conclusion and Proposals**

Nowadays, one of the most important factors in gaining competitive power of the organizations is their employee. Especially, when considering modernity, innovation and opportunism are the essential factors of competition; it can be understood better, in this context, the importance of support universities give to their employees (academicians). The perception of organizational support of academicians is highly important, and comes into prominence in the context of both their self-improvement and for being increased of the contribution they make to science and their fields of study. Especially the positive effect of the support that they can get from the motivation at work and job satisfaction that provide the pleasure of work is inevitable. On the other hand, it is certain that employees with the lack of organizational support disinclose from both work and organization; therefore, there will be negative consequences, which may lead to alienation. At the same time, dissatisfaction of job which alienation creates is also an expected fact that may occur.

In this study, which includes 269 academicians in a state university, the relationships between “perceived organizational support and the job satisfaction”, “perceived organizational support and alienation”, and “alienation and job satisfaction” were examined. The results from the correlation analysis of the data shows that there is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction, a negative relationship between perceived organizational support and alienation, and a negative relationship between job satisfaction and alienation. In addition, those relationships are at the middle level strength. The acceptance of the H1 hypothesis, which tested the relationship between the perceived organizational support and job satisfaction, supports the literature and also emphasizes the importance of organization’s attitude of supportive, encouraging and making things easier in terms of academician’s happiness, success and satisfaction. It is important for those people who have the occupation that requires being at work most of their time and working to know that the importance of their efforts is known and appreciated by their organizations and they are receiving recompenses for their work.

Even though the studies that examine the relationship between perceived organizational support and alienation are few in number, the results of those studies show that there is a negative relationship. In this context, the results of the correlation analysis, which reveals the relationship between perceived organizational support and alienation, and the results of the regression analysis, which tested the H2 hypothesis, shows that there is a negative, middle level strength relationship between those two variables. Therefore, it can be said that the perceptions of the organizational support for academicians who have busy schedules may reduce the introversion and loneliness that are caused by busy schedule.

On the contrary, not being supported by the organization may cause dissatisfaction, feeling of not belonging to the organization and even becoming distant from everything and everyone over time. In the study, a negative relationship was determined between the job satisfaction and alienation. The relationship, which was determined as middle level strength, is supported by a set of studies that was accomplished in past. Studies emphasize that with the increase of job satisfaction, organizational alienation decreases, and with the decrease of job satisfaction, alienation increases. For the academic staff in university, an increase in the job satisfaction will lead a reduction in disappointment of not realization of occupational norms, reduction in the alienation feeling, which basing on the problems related with occupational improvement, that may cause becoming distant from their university or from their unit. This study, which was limited only to one public university’s academic staff, is thought to enlighten studies on academic and administrative staff of other universities in other countries. In fact, we believe that this kind of studies on organizations in different sectors will be helpful to organizations and administrators in understanding, enhancing and leading the employee’s behaviors on the purpose of increasing the organizational performance.

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### Appendices

**Table 1: Results of Factor Analysis**

Perceived Organizational Support		Job Satisfaction		Alienation	
Question No	Factor	Question No	Factor	Question No	Factor
ÖD-2	,919	İT-4	,899	Y-2	,791
ÖD-3	,915	İT-1	,877	Y-4	,789
ÖD-1	,906	İT-3	,862	Y-5	,757
ÖD-5	,897	İT-2	,821	Y-3	,733
ÖD-6	,896	İT-5	,760	Y-8	,697
ÖD-8	,891			Y-6	,638
ÖD-7	,886			Y-1	,628
ÖD-4	,875			Y-7	,606
Cronbach Alfa	,966		,897		,854
Expl. Variance	% 80,69		%71,45		%50,15
KMO	,952		,881		,876
Bartlett df	28		10		28
Approx. Chi-Square	2395,55		808,313		779,613
Sig.	,000		,000		,000

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Variables and the Results of Correlation Analysis**

	Ort.	S.S.	1	2	3
Perceived Organizational Support	3,496	1,083	<b>1</b>		
Job Satisfaction	4,062	,827	,435**	<b>1</b>	
Alienation	1,893	,760	-,420**	-,560**	<b>1</b>

\*\* Correlation is meaningful at 0.01 level.

**Table 3: Regression Analysis to Test the Relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Job Satisfaction**

	Job Satisfaction						
	B	Beta	T	R2	Düz.R2	F	P
Perceived Organizational Support	,304	,398	7,079	,158	,155	50,108	,000

**Table 4: Regression Analysis to Test the Relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Alienation**

	Alienation						
	B	Beta	T	R2	Düz.R2	F	P
Perceived Organizational Support	-,570	-,400	-7,137	,160	,157	50,943	,000

**Table 5: Regression Analysis to Test the Relationship between Alienation and Job Satisfaction**

	Job Satisfaction						
	B	Beta	T	R2	Düz.R2	F	P
Alienation	-,659	-,606	-12,446	,367	,365	154,905	,000

**Table 6: Evaluation of the Hypotheses Tests**

Hypotheses	Accept//Reject	Explanation
H1: Organizational Support Perception has a significant and positive effect on Job Satisfaction.	Accept	Organizational support that employees perceive affects their job satisfaction significantly in a positive way. Increase in the organizational support will lead to an increase in the job satisfaction.
H2: Organizational Support has a significant and negative effect on Alienation.	Accept	Organizational support that employees perceive affects alienation significantly in a negative way. Increase in the organizational support will lead to a decrease in the alienation.
H3: Alienation has a significant and negative effect on Job Satisfaction.	Accept	Alienation of the employees affects their job satisfaction significantly in a negative way. Job satisfaction will be affected negatively from the increase in the alienation and the dissatisfaction will increase.