

Exploring the Role of Perceived External Prestige in Employee's Emotional Appeal: Evidence from a Textile Firm

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Abstract: Perceived external prestige (PEP) is an new interesting topic in the organizational literature however limited study have sought to investigate its' impacts on employees working attitudes. The purpose of this paper is to investigate PEP influence on employee's emotional appeals toward working organization. The data used in this study taken from 200 employees which were worked in well-known textile industry firm. Employees' commitment to their organization was assessed with the six-item affective commitment instrument which was developed by Meyer et.al. (1990, 1991) and individual's organizational identification and PEP were measured by Mael and Ashforth (1992) six-item organizational identification and external prestige scale where job satisfaction assessed with Michigan Organizational Evaluation Scale's shorten sub-scales (Spector, 1997). Hierarchical regression analysis was used to estimate the relationship between PEP and positive work variables relationship. The results showed that PEP was an impact on affective commitment by full mediating role of job satisfaction and organizational identification.

Keywords: Perceived external prestige, Affective commitment, Organizational identification, Job satisfaction, Reputation, Hierarchical regression analysis

JEL Classification: M10, M12

Algılanan Dışsal Prestijin Çalışanların Duyguları Üzerine Etkisi: Bir Tekstil Firması Örneği

Özet: Algılanan dışsal prestij kavramı örgüt biliminde yeni ve ilgi çekici bir kavram olmasına karşın, kavramın olumlu iş çıktıları ile olan ilişkisi yeterli düzeyde incelenmemiştir. Bu kapsamda çalışmada, çalışanlar tarafından algılanan örgütsel prestijin bireylerin çalıştıkları örgütlere ilişkin geliştirdikleri duygusal tepkileri nasıl etkilediği incelenmektedir. Bu çerçevede tekstil endüstrisinde faaliyet gösteren bir firmanın 200 çalışanını kapsayan bir saha çalışması yürütülmüştür. Deneklerin örgütsel bağlılıkları 6 ifadeli Meyer ve arkadaşları tarafından önerilen örgütsel bağlılık ölçeği (1990, 1991), örgütsel özdeşleşmeleri ve algıladıkları örgütsel (dışsal) prestij Mael ve Ashforth tarafından geliştirilen 6 ifadeden oluşan örgütsel özdeşleşme ve algılanan dışsal prestij ölçeği ile ölçümlendirilmiştir. Çalışmada ayrıca deneklerin iş tatminleri, Michigan Örgütsel Değerleme ölçeğinin kısa versiyonu ile değerlendirilmiştir. Hiyerarşik regresyon analizi kullanılarak ilgili değişkenler arasındaki etkileşim test edilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler çalışanların dışsal prestij algılamalarının, örgütsel bağlılıkları üzerinde iş tatmini ve örgütsel özdeşleşme değişkenlerinin tam aracı rolü ile etkili olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Algılanan dışsal prestij, Duygusal bağlılık, Örgütsel özdeşleşme, İş tatmini, İtibar, Hiyerarşik regresyon analizi

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1. Introduction

Corporate reputation or image has become interesting topics in organization studies. Changes in working environment and market structure due to the new organizational practices were constituted complex and hard competition among firms. Thus academics and practitioners were looking for new instruments, ways or asset in order to cope with this unknown environment. In this framework corporate reputation, image were noticed as new invisible assets for organizations that gaining legitimacy, competitive advantage for them in market (Kaplan and Norton, 1992; Elsbach, 1994; Weigelt and Camerer, 1988; Deephouse and Carter, 2005). In recent studies corporate reputation and image variables were draw attention for their positive effects on human resource practices. Today's organizations seek new variables to build a partnership between the organization and its employees to make the organization's objectives attainable. Thus organizational researches and human resource practitioners are looking new instruments which are provide emotional or cognitive bonds, ties between employees and organizations, in order to keep talent individuals inside organization and orient them to achieve organizational goals. Hence employee's reputation or image perception posit as new asset that binding individuals into the organization.

Studies thus far just focus on individuals' positive prestige perceptions influence on market activities. A few researchers have devoted efforts toward examining how organizational image or prestige fosters positive employee behavior such as organizational identification and commitment (March and Simon 1958; Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Dutton et. al., 1994; Carmeli and Freund, 2002; Carmeli, 2005a; Carmeli, 2005b; Freund, 2006). However those researches did not explore the models that characterize employee's prestige perception effects on individual's organizational attitudes. Thus main aim of this research is to investigate how employee's prestige perceptions constitute emotional bond with their working organizations.

2. Theory and Hypothesis

Perceived external prestige (PEP) was showed degree of organizational prestige when compared it with other relates and defined as perceived organizational prestige by Mael and Ashforth studies (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). Bergami and Bagozzi associate concept with organizational statute and defined concept with well-recognized, well-prestige institute terms where Smithds et.al. describe PEP as individual level interpretation and evaluation of organizational prestige based on employee's own information (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000; Smithd's et. al., 2001).

Despite author's conceptual differentiation, this study was postulated that employees' organizational prestige perception is special kind or other face/side of corporate reputation. Thus this research assumed that perceived external prestige is also illustrated as employees' reputation perception about working organization. Fombrun defined corporate reputation as aggregate images of firms among key stakeholder (Fombrun and Shanley 1990). According to stakeholder approach, an organization does not present one image, but rather multiple images (Thompson, 1967). Each of the various stakeholder groups relates differently to the organization and thus they have different perception relating to the organization (Freeman, 1984). Thus each stakeholder has different transactions, interests and expectations so different relations with the same firm. Employees have exchange based relation with organizations that used different criterias for evaluate it. So they could have different prestige perception about the organization than customers, competitors or suppliers (Riordan et. al., 1997; Carmelli et.al., 2006; Dowling, 2001). Perceived organizational

prestige was conceptualized by Dutton's studies (1991, 1994) as construct external image, which was specific form of organizational image and defined as organizations members' assessments about what others thinks about their organization (Dutton and Duckerich, 1991; Dutton et. al., 1994). Authors defined corporate reputation as outsiders beliefs about what distinguishes an organization, from others (Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Dutton et.al. 1994; Smitdt et.al., 2001; Carmeli and Freund 2002) and differentiate it from constructed external image or external prestige perception based on insiders and outsiders interpretation of organizational informations where as sometimes insiders organizational prestige perception closed aligned outsider perception.(Dutton and Duckerich, 1991) Based on stakeholder approach this study was assumed that employee's perceived organizational prestige is special type of organizational reputation perception which was holding by employees (Herbach et.al., 2004).

In related literature researchers mentioned that positive prestige perception about working organizations constituted positive feelings about it. Ashforth and Meal found that prestige perception provides organizational identification (Mael and Ashforth, 1992) which results was repeated by other researchers (Cole and Brunc 2006, Bhattacharya et.al., 1995; Smitdts et.al., 2001; Dukerich et.al., 2002; Liponnen et.al., 2005). As also in his several empirical researches Carmeli and others reported that prestige perception has also have influence on employees organizational commitment Herrbach et.al. 2004; Carmeli and Freund, 2002; Carmeli, 2005a; Carmeli 2005b; Freund 2006). Thus this research postulated that PEP has a positive influence on employees organizational identification and commitment.

2.1. Organizational Identification and Perceived External Prestige (PEP)

Organizational identification was defined as "perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregation" (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). Concept also described as process of incorporating the perception of oneself as a member of a particular organization into one's general self-definition (Dutton et. al., 1994). Organizational identification was also characterized as process that individuals cognitive adaptation of organizational values and goals to his own identity and used those features to described himself (Pratt, 1998; Herrbach, 2006). Thus identification is an active process that individuals link themselves to social actor elements (Cheney, 1983). Despite their heterogeneity, all these definitions identification process implied that organizational members have linked their organizational membership to their self concepts, either cognitive (feeling part of organization, internalized organizational values) emotional (pride in membership) or both (Riketta, 2005).

Empirical researches have highlighted potential benefits of identification to the organizations. Organizational identification forms a base for employees's attitudes and behaviors towards organizations (Van Kippenberg and Van Schie, 2000). The growing number of researches found that organizational identification positively related with organizational commitment, citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, perceived organizational prestige where it has negative effect on employees' turnover intentions (Hall et.al., 1970; Van Dick et.al., 2004; Bomber and Ilyer, 2002; Mignonac et.al., 2006; Riketta, 2005; Cole and Brunc, 2006). Based on high correlations of organizational identification with positive work variables, researchers were claimed that organizational identification was formed a bases for emotional bond with employer and employees in organizations (Van Dick et. al., 2004; Bomber and Ilyer, 2002).

Based on Tajfel and Turners' social identity theory individuals tend to looking for positive social identity and self image for social approval (Turner et. al 1979; Dutton et. al, 1994). According to identification process when members beliefs that outsiders see their organization in a positive light, organizations become more attractive for them and they proud to be part of and being a member of it Individuals self image was influenced by the characteristics that others inferred them based on their social category (Hogg and Terry, 2000). In this scope positive prestige perception about working organization fosters positive evaluation of ones self image. If employees' perception about working organization is positive or socially valued, they identify their self with their working organization which informed organizational identification and they feel emotional bond with their organization where those positive feelings provide job satisfaction. Thus based on social identity theory perceived external prestige was defined as antecedent of organizational identification (Mael and Ashforth, 1994; Bhattacharya et. al., 1995; Smitdts et.al., 2001; Dukerich et.al., 2002; Liponnen et. al., 2005; Carmeli et. al., 2006).

2.2. Organizational Commitment and Perceived External Prestige (PEP)

In general meaning commitment is a stabilizing or obliging force that gives direction to behaviors (restricts freedom, binds the person to course of action). In Instrumental perspective commitment definitions were refers Exchange based relationship between individual and working organization (Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1972). If this exchange process effectively works, it was establish commitment between exchange partners (Blau, 1989; Becker, 1960). In psychological perspective which links conceptual relation with organizational identification, defined organizational commitment as internalization of organizational goals and values, willing to invest effort in the organization and sense of belongingness manifested as a wish to stay (Steers, 1977; Porter, et.al., 1974; Mowday, et.al., 1979). For Meyer et al., organizational commitment is a psychological state that characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization and has implications to decide to continue membership in the organization (Meyer et al., 1990; Meyer and Allen 1991; Meyer et.al., 1993, Meyer and Allen, 1997). Researchers were argued that commitment binds individual to an organization, has psychological structure that maintain employees interactions with their organizations and take a decision to employees to remain in organization (Meyer et. al., 1993; Meyer and Allen, 1997). Thus affective commitment, employee's emotional to, identification with and involvement in the organization. Individuals who commit their organization based on affective tone, remains in organization because they "want" to stay (Meyer et. al., 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer et. al., 1993; Meyer and Allen, 1997).

Researches on organizational behavior have been demonstrated that organizational commitment has positive relationship with employees' work attitudes. Findings demonstrated that participation, job satisfaction, job involvement were main antecedent of organizational commitment where in recent studies were also associated that organizational identification as also predict organizational commitment (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Van Dick and Wagner, 2002; Haslam et.al., 2003; Pratt, 1998; Riketta, 2005; Van Kippenberg and Sleebos, 2006) on the other hand low turnover intention and actual dysfunctional turnover were assumed as main consequences of high commitment (Steers, 1977; Marhiue and Zajac, 1990; Angle and Perry, 1981; Randall, 1990; Cohen, 1992; Riketta, 2002; Meyer et. al., 2002).

However limited researches have taken into consideration of employee's positive prestige perception influence on organizational commitment. Carmeli and Freund claimed that PEP and organizational commitment are related under concept of organizational effectiveness (Carmeli and Freund, 2002, pp. 61-62; Freund, 2006, pp. 78-79) where Mayer and Schorman found direct relations between value commitment and organizational prestige (Mayer and Schoorman, 1998). Also March and Simon mentioned that prestige perception developed emotional bond with organization and individuals (March and Simon, 1958) where others investigated concepts relation with out considering organizational identification effect (Herrbach et.al., 2004; Carmeli and Freund, 2002; Carmeli, 2005a; Carmeli, 2005b; Freund, 2006). However only Ellemers et. al. (1999) and Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) were examined organizational commitment and identification interaction in PEP relation model by Tajfel's (1982) three-dimensional identification construct. The empirical findings of Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) was showed that perceived organizational prestige has positive effects on affective commitment by organizational identification mediating effect where this findings confirmed by other researchers (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000; Barters et. al., 2007: 182, Carmeli et. al., 2006).

As findings of organizational commitment literature that reported high correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Steers 1977; Marhiue and Zajac, 1990; Angle and Perry 1981; Randall, 1990; Cohen,1992; 1993; Riketta, 2002; Meyer et. al., 2002) and as also social identity theory's associations of PEP, organizational identification, and organizational commitment relationship, this study was examined Organizational identification and job satisfaction's mediating role between PEP and Organizational commitment relationship.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The data used in this study taken from a textile industry firms in Bursa and 200 usable questionnaires was received. Participants' 83 percent were male, 51.2 percent held a B.A degree and 12.6 percent an MA degree. Respondent's organizational tenure range from 1 to 16 year, with 23.2 percent between 4-7 year, 37.7 percent between 8 and 15 year, 18.4 percent were over 16 year. Both of them are full-time employees and 75 percent of participants are married.

3.2. Measures

All items are measured on five-point scale, ranging from 1= "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree". All scale items translate English to Turkish and back translate to English based on a standard translation-back translation procedure in order to preclude any misrendering or misunderstanding under control of English lecturer.

Organizational Commitment: Affective commitment to organization was assessed with the six-item affective commitment instrument which was developed by Meyer et. al (1993) and used by other researcher in related issues for measuring affective tone of commitment (Carmeli 2005, Carmeli, Gilat, Weisberg 2006, Freund 2006) or emotional component of identification (Bergami and Bagozzi 2000). Some of scale items were "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own' This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me, 'I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization' (reverse item) It has used confirmatory factor analysis to determine affective commitment measure. (Jöreskog, 1993) Here by the results of the

analysis prove the validity of the scale ($\alpha = 0.75$; GFI= 0.99; AGFI= 0.99; CFI=1; RMSR=0.01; RMSEA: 0.01).

Organizational Identification: We used six-item scale of Mael and Ashforth (1992) in order to assess the organizational identification. This six -item scale was tested before (Tak and Aydemir, 2004) on Turkish (N=425, $\alpha = .88$) sample. Sample item "when someone criticizes my organization it feels like personal insult". For this study confirmatory factor analysis results are $\alpha = 0.75$; GFI= 0.94; AGFI= 0.80; CFI=0.90; RMSR=0.07; RMSEA: 0.08.

Perceived External Prestige (PEP): This measure is based on Mael and Ashforth's "Perceived Organizational Prestige" eight item scale, an measure has been used by numerous scholars, including Mael and Ashforth 1992, ($\alpha=0.77$), Smidts et.al. 2001 ($\alpha=0.73$), Herrbach et.al.2004, ($\alpha:0.86$), Bhattacharya et al., 1995 ($\alpha=0.69$), Lipponen et.al., 2005 ($\alpha=0.83$). In this study scale's Cronbach α is 0.79 and confirmatory factor analysis results (GFI= 0.89, AGFI= 0.765, CFI=0.849, RMSR=0.08, RMSEA= 0.14) showed that this scale is reliable and has validity on Turkish sample.

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction measured 3 items taken from Michigan Organizational Evaluation Scale's shorten sub-scales (Spector 1997) ($\alpha=0.55$; sample item: Generally I satisfied working my current organization. GFI= 0.99; AGFI= 0.98; CFI=1; RMSR=0.02; RMSEA; 0.01). This instrument was frequently used by Turkish researchers and scale was tested before by Tak and Aydemir in 2004 (N=425, $\alpha = .68$)

Control variables: The respondents were asked to indicate their gender, age, tenure and education level. Those demographic variables were used to control the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

4. Results

The descriptive statistics, means, standard deviations and correlations among the research variables are presented in Table 1. As expected, perceived organizational prestige was significantly and highly related to affective commitment ($r=0.56$, $p<0.001$), organizational identification ($r=0.50$, $p<0.001$) and job satisfaction ($r=0.47$, $p<0.001$). It was also weak but significantly associated with age ($r=0.15$, $p<0.05$) and education level of employees ($r=0.14$, $p<0.05$). Organizational identification is significantly correlated with affective commitment ($r=0.69$, $p<0.001$), job satisfaction ($r=0.30$, $p<0.001$) and education level ($r=0.17$, $p<0.05$). Employee's affective commitment to organization is also related to their job satisfaction ($r=0.43$, $p<0.001$).

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Research Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	3	0.94	1								
Education	2.5	1.20	0.23***	1							
Tenure	3.59	2.91	0.37***	0.10	1						
Medeni hal	1.15	0.43	-0.0	0.24***	0.06	1					
Gender	1.66	0.60	0.35***	0.08	0.00	-0.01	1				
Affective commitment	3.9	0.68	0.17*	-0.12	0.06	-0.01	-0.05	1			
Organizational identification	3.91	0.69	0.12	-0.17*	0.06	-0.05	-0.05	0.69***	1		
PEP	3.91	0.59	0.15*	-0.14*	0.07	-0.03	0.02	0.56***	0.5***	1	
Job Satisfaction	3.78	0.47	0.02	-0.04	0.10	0.08	0.04	0.43***	0.3***	0.47***	1

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

To explore the PEP effect on job attitudes it conducted on hierarchical regression analysis. Table 2 presented the results of multiple hierarchical regression analysis. The results of first step showed that under control of demographic variable influences PEP has significant stronger effect on Job satisfaction ($\beta=40$, $p<0.001$) and organizational identification ($\beta=49$, $p<0.001$). As it seen in step 2 PEP has also have statistically significant impact on organizational commitment ($\beta=43$, $p<0.001$). Demographic factors such as age ($\beta=26$, $p<0.01$) and education level ($\beta=-22$, $p<0.001$) were also have influence on Organizational commitment (Step2). When we added organizational identification and job satisfaction variable into our basic model it was found that PEP and demographic factors impact on organizational commitment is dramatically falled (Step 3). We saw that PEP effect on organizational commitment fall to $\beta=.085$ (non-significant) where this result is not statistically significant and when we compared the second and third steps, organizational identification and job satisfaction variables were produced very big and statistically significant effect on PEP and organizational commitment model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.293$, $p<0.001$). Thus this result was giving evidence that organizational identification and job satisfaction has full mediating role between PEP and organizational commitment relationship. On the other hand findings also showed that age of individuals has impact on our final model ($\beta= 147$, $p<0.05$).

Table 2. Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis: Effect of Pep on Job Attitudes

	JS	Step1 OI	Step 2 OC	Step 3
<i>Control variables</i>				
Age	.48	.20*	.26**	.147*
Education	-.12	-.21***	-.22***	-.05
Tenure	-.03	-.00	-.01	-.02
Marital status	.06	-.05	-.00	.001
Gender	.06	-.11	-.11	-.07
<i>Independent variable</i>				
PEP (Meal and Ashforth)	.40***	.49***	.427***	.085
<i>Mediator variable</i>				
Org. Identification (OI)				.56***
Job Satisfaction (JS)				.222***
ΔR^2				
Total ΔR^2	.168	.27	.255	.548
Adjusted R^2	.143	.248	.233	.529
F	6.738***	12.270***	11.384***	29.856***

Standardized beta weights are shown.

* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p <0.001$

5. Discussion

The goal of this study was to explore the relationship between PEP and positive workplace attitudes. Findings indicated that positive perception about working organization predicts strong workplace attitudes. Results presented that there was a relationship existing between PEP, affective commitment, job satisfaction and organizational identification Final model of research was showed that perceived external prestige of working organization has influence of employee's emotional

commitment by full mediating role of organizational identification and job satisfaction which means that positive prestige perception predict organizational identification and job satisfaction which in turn developed commitment to the organization. Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) found that organizational prestige was directly affecting identification which in turn influences affective commitment but not vice-verse (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000, p. 570) where similar results cited by other researchers (Carmeli et.al., 2006; 100; Fuller et. al., 2006b). Hence findings of this research was supported the assumption of social identity theory that positive and stronger external prestige foster the individuals membership in organizations in order to define themselves with organizations identity, internalized the values and goals of organizations (Whetten and Mackey, 2002; Bhattacharya et.al., 1995; Mignnonanac et. al., 2006) thereby PEP and organizational identification both increasing employees' affective commitment (Carmeli and Freund 2002; Freund 2006). PEP was also promoted positive perception on job and job expectation thus it is source of greater satisfaction ($\beta=.222$, $p<0.001$). Results also presented that there was a significant correlation between individuals' age and work variables ($\beta=.147$, $p<0.05$). Thus based on findings someone could say that when individual's age was increased they were binding their organizations.

To be validated the relationship which one identified, need to be repeated in various different samples. This study was aimed at specific populations which are member of well-regarded and well repudiated organizations members in related sector in Bursa thus this specialty of sample would affect the results. Therefore one should consider the effect upon industry and firms situation on society while interpreting the findings of this study.

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