

Perceived Organizational Support, Psychological Empowerment, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Job Performance and Job Embeddedness: A Research on the Fast Food Industry in Istanbul, Turkey

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to provide empirical evidence on the relationships among psychological empowerment, perceived organizational support, organizational citizenship behavior, job embeddedness and job performance. Fast food restaurants have existed in Turkey for more than 20 years over which time they have registered an average of 10 percent growth per year, and have attracted foreign fast food chains to invest in Turkey. Istanbul has the most fast food restaurants throughout Turkey with 45 percent. Thus, the fast food restaurants which are located in Istanbul is focused in this study. Questionnaires were distributed to approximately 700 employees and data were collected from June to July 2013. The response rate was 61.2%. Structural equation modelling was used to test the relationships between variables. The results that obtained through the tests support the hypothesized model. This research represented a strong relationship between psychological empowerment, perceived organizational support, organizational citizenship behavior, job embeddedness (as a moderator) and job performance of the employees in fast food industry in Istanbul, Turkey. This result is noteworthy for employers and managers to retain their talented employees. In addition to that, since there is not any study that conducted in fast food industry in this study's context in the literature, this study makes a valuable contribution to the literature.

Keywords: perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment, organizational citizenship behavior, job embeddedness, job performance, fast food industry, Turkey

1. Introduction

The hospitality and tourism industry is the largest industry in the world (Olsen, 1996). Fast food is typically quick, convenient, cheap and uniform in its production (Fraser, Edwards & Clarke, 2011; DeMaria, 2013) Fast food has become arguably the ultimate symbol of time efficiency and instant gratification (DeVoe, House & Zhong, 2013). Fast-food restaurants are designed and structured to save time in delivering food (DeVoe et. al., 2013) Increasing numbers of outlets was one of the main reasons for the growth of fast food sector in Turkey (Euromonitor). The increase in the number of working women in society, the increase in income levels, and more hectic lifestyle caused by urbanization have led to a change in consumption patterns and eating habits, which reflect positively on the hotel restaurant sector (HRI). According to USDA Foreign Agricultural Service's Global Agricultural Information Report, Turkish people consume much more food in restaurants than their homes. Fast food sector is a 16 billion USD market for the year of 2013. This sector's revenues would be 30 billion USD per year by 2020. Such a huge growth is really become attractive for fast food restaurants. There are both international and national fast food chains in Turkey. International fast food restaurants have approximately 10% growth in every year. Thus, such a growth is very attractive for both international and national fast food chains to invest in Turkey. Istanbul is the most developed city in Turkey. The 45% of fast food restaurants of Turkey is placed in Istanbul (Atalaysun, 2013). Hence, the fast food industry is a rising star in Turkey's economy.

The theories and researchs on social exchange (Van Dyne & Ang, 1998) and norms of reciprocity (Gouldner,

1960) assert that individuals feel obligation and willing to help others and organizations that have helped them. Employee work attitudes and service performance are important for achieving organization's objectives, maintaining competitive advantage and performance efficiency (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012; Karatepe & Sökmen, 2006). According to Organ (1988; 1990), employees should perform beyond their organizations' expectations to increase the organizational efficiency. This affirmative and self-initiated behavior is named as organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988; 1990). Organ (1988) also stated that organizational citizenship behavior helps organizations in gaining organizational efficiency in their activities. Eisenberger, Fasolo, and David-Lamastro (1990) asserted that although different variables were used in studies as antecedent variables of organizational citizenship behavior, perceived organizational support was a more important antecedent variable. Another antecedent of organizational citizenship behavior, namely psychological empowerment was asserted by Conger and Kanungo in 1988. They were followed by other researchers (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Spreitzer, 1995). Since psychological empowerment can change employees' inner motivation, it also induces organizational citizenship behavior (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012). Many researchers have studied on psychological empowerment and perceived organizational support as the antecedent variables of organizational citizenship behaviors (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012; Eisenberger et al., 1990; Yen, Lin, & Thai, 2004). According to the results of many studies, organizational citizenship behavior is one attribute of job performance (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012; Turnipseed & Rassuli, 2005). Besides, many studies asserted that organizational citizenship behavior, perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment and job performance are related (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012; Chow, Lo, Sha & Hong, 2006; Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Liden, Wayne & Sparrowe, 2000; Niehoff, Moorman, Blakely & Fuller, 2001; Peccei & Rosenthal, 2001; Spreitzer, Kizilos & Nason, 1997). According to the reviewed theories (Hulin, 1991; Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski & Erez, 2001), job embeddedness is related to job performance.

Because of reasons mentioned so far, conducting a research in fast food industry will make a valuable contribution to the literature. To the the best of the author's knowledge, there is not any related research which consists all variables, namely perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment, organizational citizenship behavior, job embeddedness, and job performance, of this study in the literature. According to the literature, many empirical studies about restaurant sector is conducted in the USA (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). In some of these studies, retention of service employees (Michael, Kwortnik & Sturman, 2011), service quality (Min & Min, 2011), work environment and personality (Crawford, Hubbard, O'Neill & Guarino, 2009) were the main focus areas. Therefore, testing this study's relationships in a developing country will make a contribution to the literature. In addition to that, many researchers stated that the moderating role of JE hasn't been extensively studied (Burton, Holtom, Sablinski, Mitchell & Lee, 2010; Sekiguchi et al., 2008). Because of that reason adding JE as a moderator variable in this study's model will fill a gap in the literature as it was suggested in the literature by these researchers.

This research focused on fast food employees to examine the relationship among psychological empowerment, perceived organizational support, organizational citizenship behavior, job embeddedness and job performance. The main research goals of this present study were to decide how perceived organizational support and psychological empowerment influence the job performance of employees in the fast food industry. The model and hypotheses were tested by structural equation modelling approach.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) is described as a common feeling of employees toward their organizations; it explains whether they value their employees' contributions and pay attention to their well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Stamper and Johlke (2003) stated when the organizations provide sufficient support to their employees, these organizations get an acceptable and desirable level of performance in return.

2.2 Psychological Empowerment

Daft (2001) stated that, psychological empowerment (PE) makes individuals be a part of decision taking and organizational issues by giving them control and independence. Spreitzer (1995) defined PE as the degree of empowerment that employees feel internally. In the literature, many studies focused on PE (Chiang & Jang, 2008; Liden, Wayne & Sparrow, 2000).

2.3 Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The concept of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is reproduced from Katz's (1964) study which is related with the extra-role behavior. Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) defined OCB as an affirmative employee

action that starts voluntarily. Employees with OCB aren't affected by rewards and/or incentives (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). In the literature, authors have underlined the importance of OCB on the performance of organizations (Karambayya, 1989; Chen, Hui & Segó, 1998). According to Eisenberger et al., (1986), if organizations make employees have good feelings toward them by giving value to their individual contribution and prosperity, employees demonstrate a tendency to expose a sense of obligation to their organizations.

2.4 Job Embeddedness

Job embeddedness (JE) is an employee retention theory and describes the set of effects on employees' judgement to keep them on their jobs (Holtom, Mitchell & Lee, 2006). Mitchell et al., (2001) studied on employees' retention reasons. Mitchell et al., (2001) delineated '*embeddedness*' as people's belonging to the relations in a social web. This social web has three key aspects (Mitchell et al., 2001). These are links, fit and sacrifice. Links represent the relationships with other individuals or organizations. Fit represents an individual's comfort toward to his/her organization and its atmosphere. Sacrifice represents the perceived prices of tangible or intangible utilities which might be lost by resigning the present job.

2.5 Job Performance

Job performance (JP) can be defined all the acts of an employee displays while working (Jex, 2002). There are three ways to describe JP (Milkovich & Wigdor, 1991); as a function of outcomes, behaviour, and individual characteristics. In recent years, most of the articles' subjects have focused on describing JP by outcomes and behaviours. Because, describing and monitoring them is simpler and less subjective to describing and monitoring individual characteristics (Hersén, 2004).

2.6 The Relations between POS, PE, OCB, JE and JP

Literature shows that POS and OCB are related significantly (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Wayne, Shore, Bommer & Tetrick, 2002). When employees feel their organization cares their individual values, they show OCB in higher levels (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000). Conger and Kanungo (1988) stated that PE is a kind of internal motivation which conduces to promote OCB. Morrison (1996) asserted that PE motivates individuals and increases their OCBs. Studies indicate that one of the indicators of JP is OCB (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994; Turnipseed & Rassuli, 2005). Many researchers studied POS and PE as anterior variables of OCB (Wayne et al., 1997, 2002; Yen et al., 2004). Job performance can be increased by OCB (Turnipseed & Rassuli, 2005). POS, OCB, and PE are closely related with JP (Niehoff et al., 2001; Chow, Lo, Sha & Hong, 2006). Chen (2008) conducted a research on POS and JP and elicited that if an employee has a higher degree of POS, this person exhibits affirmative OCB, and OCB improves JP of this employee. There are studies on the relationship between the JE and JP (Lee et al., 2004). However, there aren't many study about the relationship between JE and JP (Karatepe & Ngeche, 2011). Lee et al. (2004) reported that JP and OCB are enhanced by JE. Karatepe and Ngeche (2011) reported that JE increases employees' JP. Many researchers stated that the moderating role of JE hasn't been extensively studied (Burton, Holtom, Sablinski, Mitchell, & Lee, 2010; Sekiguchi et al., 2008; Karatepe, 2011). So, adding JE as a moderator variable in this study's model will fill a gap in the literature as it was suggested in the literature by the researchers. In addition to that, since there is not any related research which consists all variables, namely perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment, organizational citizenship behavior, job embeddedness, and job performance, of this study in the literature, the present study will make a contribution to the literature.

3. The Research Model

According to the literature review, this study's variables and their relationships are presented in the Figure 1. In this model, perceived organizational support and psychological empowerment are the independent variables, and job performance is the dependent variable (Chiang & Hsieh, 2011; Lee, Mitchell, Sablinski, Burton & Holtom, 2004; Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Karatepe & Ngeche, 2011). The model also proposes that job embeddedness moderates the effects of organizational citizenship behavior on job performance (Karatepe, 2011; Lee, et al., 2004; Sekiguchi et al., 2008, Lee & Mitchell, 1994; Mitchell et al., 2001).

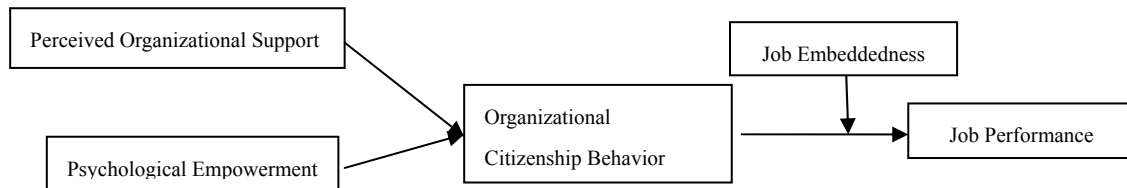


Figure 1. The research model

4. Hypotheses

In light of the discussion given before, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Perceived organizational support will be positively associated with organizational citizenship behavior.

H2: Psychological empowerment will be positively associated with organizational citizenship behavior.

H3: Employees with high levels of organizational citizenship behaviors will experience greater job performance.

H4: Job embeddedness will moderate the effects of organizational citizenship behaviors on job performance.

5. Research Methods

5.1 Method of Data Collection and Sample

As it was mentioned before, the increase in the number of working women in society, the increase in income levels, and more hectic lifestyle caused by urbanization have led to a change in consumption patterns and eating habits, which reflect positively on the hotel and restaurant sector (HRI). In Turkey, there are over 650 restaurants which operate in fast food sector (Atalaysun, 2011). These fast food restaurants have operated here for more than 20 years over which time they have registered an average of 10 percent growth per year, and have attracted foreign fast food chains to invest in Turkey. Istanbul has the most fast food restaurants throughout Turkey with 45 percent (Atalaysun, 2013). Hence, the fast food restaurants' employees in Istanbul are focused in this study. Since Istanbul is the biggest city of Turkey, the fast food restaurants which are located in outlets and in main avenues were focused. Data were collected from June to July 2013. A questionnaire was prepared and randomly distributed to fast food restaurants' employees who were volunteered to participate. Seven hundred questionnaires distributed to seventy-five restaurants' employees. Four hundred and sixteen employees completed the forms. Hence, the rate of return is 61.2%. The characteristics of this study's sample are showed (Table 1).

Table 1. The sample

| | n (416) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------------|---------|----------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 238 | 57.2 |
| Female | 178 | 42.8 |
| Age | | |
| < 20 | 153 | 36.7 |
| 21-25 | 221 | 53.1 |
| 26-30 | 35 | 8.4 |
| >31 | 7 | 1.8 |
| Position in the fast food restaurant | | |
| Cashier | 135 | 32.4 |
| Kitchen | 214 | 51.4 |
| Package Service | 67 | 16.2 |
| Experience(in the fast food industry) | | |
| <1 year | 96 | 23.1 |
| 1-3 years | 247 | 59.7 |
| 4-7 years | 70 | 16.8 |
| >7 years | 3 | 0.4 |

5.2 Measurements

The scale of POS was taken from Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, and Lynch's (1997) study. It has 8 items (e.g. "My organization cares about my opinion"; "My organization really cares about my well-being"). The scale of PE was taken from Spreitzer's (1995) study (e.g., "The work I do is very important to me"; "I am confident about my ability to do my job"). OCB scale was received from Podsakoff et al.,'s study (1990). It has 24 items. These OCB items were all reworded from the original third-person format used to obtain supervisor ratings to a first-person format suitable for the self-report methodology used in this study. JE scale is taken from Crossley, Bennett, Jex, and Burnfield's study (2007) (e.g., "I feel attached to this organization"). Composite job embeddedness was used in the international research (Ng & Feldman 2009). In this study, JP was discussed as task performance. Task performance refers to behaviors that are recognized by formal reward systems and are part of the requirements as described in job descriptions (Williams & Anderson 1991; Bachrach, Powell & Bendoly, 2006). This scale was developed by Williams and Anderson (Williams & Anderson 1991; Bachrach et al., 2006). It measures the in-role performance (e.g., "I effectively fulfilled my roles and responsibilities concerning the fast food restaurant's proposal assignment"). For measuring in-role performance, a five-point Likert-type scale was used. Seven-point Likert-type scales were used for all the other variables.

Since all of the scales are in English, the scales are translated into Turkish. For this process, Brislin, Lonner and Thorndike's (1973) technique was used. This technique implies four stages. First of all, the scales were translated into Turkish. Next, these translations were assessed. After that, backward translations were done and assessed. All of the English versions of the scales were translated into Turkish by the researcher. Finally, all of the scales read and checked by a colleague who is native in both languages to provide the clarity of terminology.

6. Results

6.1 Tests of the Scales

All of the scales' cronbach's alpha values were over 0.86. Hence, the internal consistency is above the acceptable threshold. In this study, multi-item structures were used to evaluate variables (POS, PE, OCB, JE, and JP). Factor analysis was used to determine the discriminant validity. Factor analysis with varimax rotation was operated to examine the unidimensionality among the items. Statistical package for the social sciences was employed. For examining the convergent validity of each construct, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed. According to the results, this model explained 71.13% of the variance. Factor loadings are ranged from 0.637 to 0.847.

6.2 Test of the Model

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to test the model which was shown in Figure 1. For testing the hypothesized model, LISREL was employed. According to the assesment of overall goodness-of-fit, common model fit measures are shown below:

- The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.90.
- The Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.89.
- The Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) = 0.05.
- The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.049.
- Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) = 0.76, and;
- Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) = 0.68.

As a result, overall the data indicates a favorable fit for this study's hypothesized model. The direct model of the study shows an acceptable fit with the exception of chi-square (χ^2) and comparative fit index (CFI) values. Besides, the full model looks to be superior to the direct model in expressing JP. The results of the model indicate a favorable fit of the model. Results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of SEM

| Hypothesis | Estimates | STD Solutions | t | Result |
|------------|-----------|---------------|-------|-----------|
| H1 | 0.71 | 0.71 | 10.46 | Supported |
| H2 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 10.13 | Supported |
| H3 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 2.28 | Supported |
| H4 | 0.19 | 0.21 | 3.16 | Supported |

6.3 Model Measures

Convergent validity refers to the relationship between measures. It shows the extent to which two measures capture the same information. The more similar the information they capture, the more likely they are to produce equivalent research results (Carlson & Herdman, 2012). Convergent validity was measured by testing item-total correlations, based on the correlation of each item with the sum of the remaining items. It assumes that the total score is valid. By this way, the extent to which the item correlates with the total score is indicative of convergent validity for the item. This study's variables' correlations obtained item-to-total correlation values which are over 0.60. In addition to that, the significance and the relative strength of individual links of this study's research model were measured. According to the results, there was a meaningful support for the research hypotheses.

7. Conclusion

The present study's data indicates a favorable fit with the hypothesized model. This study's direct model presents an appropriate fit with the exception of chi-square and comparative fit index values. Moreover, the full model looks to be superior to the direct model in explaining the job performance. The results of model present a favorable fit of the model. The measurement model of this study's analysis shows that the asserted measurements have a fine degree of validity and reliability. Hence, they can be employed to interpret the factors that have an effect on employees' job performance.

The present study makes some valuable contributions to the literature. First of all, this study is one of the pioneer studies in fast food industry in a developing country. Besides, fast food industry in Turkey is growing very fast. For maintaining the competitive advantage in this industry, employers and managers should take into consideration this study's results to retain their talented employees. For these reasons, this present study's results would provide beneficial effects for managers and organizations for business implementation. Moreover, in the literature, since there is not any study that conducted in fast food industry in this study's context; this study makes a valuable contribution to the literature.

In this study, there are some limitations. This study's sample is taken from fast food industry in Istanbul which has the most fast food restaurants throughout Turkey with 45 percent. The analysis of such data may enable conclusions to be drawn about both causality and more generalized relationships among variables. Besides, other factors than job embeddedness (work-life balance, life satisfaction, leader-member exchange, etc.), as a moderator, can be included in the model. In the future studies, the participants can be chosen from different territories, industries, or even countries. In addition to that, the present study is a cross-sectional study and maybe this cross-sectional data would not permit to define causal inferences concerning various hypothesised relations. The other limitation is participants' self-reporting. Since a common source bias exists in this study, a longitudinal and a cross-cultural study may provide a better understanding in future studies.

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