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Research Article

THE EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON ANXIETY LEVELS OF EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

The norms and attitudes within the organizational culture do not comply with the interests and expectations of the members of the organization so that can cause anxiety. This study aimed to explore the effect of between organizational culture on anxiety levels of employees. The research sample included 243 respondents from 10 randomly selected companies that agreed to participate in the research. Beck Anxiety Scale and O'Reilly et al.'s Organizational Culture Profile (OCP) was used for measuring organizational culture and anxiety level. The exploratory factor analysis identified seven components of organizational culture namely aggressive, stable, outcome-oriented, innovative, detail-oriented, team-oriented, and people-oriented. And four components of anxiety levels of employees namely general anxiety, acute anxiety and trauma, autonomic anxiety, and subjective anxiety. There was an only significant relationship between the organizational culture and the subjective anxiety which is the sub-dimension of the anxiety levels of employees. The main findings of this study, organizational culture does not affect the anxiety levels of employees. The side findings of this study, there was no statistically significant difference anxiety levels of employees by gender. I suggest that future researchers carry out similar studies using a larger and different sector sample.

KEYWORDS

Organizational Culture, Culture, Anxiety, Istanbul, Turkey.

INTRODUCTION

The factors that cause anxiety are increasing and intensifying day by day in the culture we live in. Organization-related mental disorders are gaining more and more importance in our modern societies. The World Health Organization, which determines the health strategies of the employees, emphasized the importance of the psychosocial structure of the work and the psychosocial factors affecting the employees (The World Health Organization, 1990). Anxiety is a negative-valence emotion that is characterized by appraisals of uncertainty (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Spielberger, 1966). Anxiety is defined as an unpleasant state of arousal in which a person experiences emotional, mental and physical changes in response to perceived threatening situations (Miguel-Tobal & Gonzalez-Ordi, 2005). Anxiety is caused not by direct events, but by a person's irrational beliefs. Therefore, the meaning that a person attributes to a particular situation or event is important.

While many studies have examined the relationship between organizational culture and employee mental disorders, few studies have looked specifically at anxiety. In addition, existing studies have not considered the existing physical health status of employees in that relationship. The purpose of this study was twofold: (1) to determine if there are differences by gender and education in terms of anxiety level and (2) to examine the effect of between organizational culture on anxiety levels of employees. In addition, this research can help to understand how organizational culture can affect anxiety levels of employees and individual results.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of culture was a highly debated topic. On examination, it is seen that there were at least one hundred and fifty-seven definitions even between 1920 and 1950 alone (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). When

examined from a theoretical point of view, it is not easy task concept to understand. The purpose of culture was to overcome barbarism and realize the higher values embodied in a broad, neo-classical understanding of urbanity and civilization, such as intellectual conscience, reason, and obedience to authority. For this reason, culture was associated with products that seemed to embody these goods, such as classical music, opera, literature, food (Johnson, 2013).

Williams stated that culture "is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" in 1958. This confusion created by the concept of culture occurs because it is an interdisciplinary concept and has used in many European languages. The word culture comes from the Latin word "colere" and this word has many meanings such as cultivating, honoring with worship, protecting. Williams stated that some of these meanings fell away. Culture began to bring out as an abstract concept in the mid-19th century. While it first took place as "kultur" in German, it changed as "culture" in the 19th century and started to be used in the same sense as civilization. In the same way, it is associated with civilization in French (Firat et al., 2013).

The subject of culture is of interest to many researchers because the analysis of this concept makes it easier to understand human behavior. Taylor defined culture is a "mental phenomenon, consisting of the contents of minds, not of material objects or observable behavior" (Taylor, 1948). In addition, culture was defined by Hofstede as the collective mental programming of the people in an environment. Hofstede likened culture to the personality of individuals and stated that is the personality of societies (Hofstede, 1991). Linton defined culture in his widely accepted definition as "a configuration of learned behaviors and outcomes that are shared and transmitted by members of a particular society"

(Linton, 1945). This multi-meaning and profound topic plays an important role in showing how individuals act in society and form a shared sense of identity.

There are 5 dimensions in the multidimensional culture typology developed by Hofstede, which focuses on cultural differences in the international arena; power distance, masculinity vs femininity, uncertainty avoidance, individualism vs collectivism and long-term vs short-term orientation. Hofstede has been criticized because he focused only on international culture (Kiymalioglu; et al., 2018).

Organizational culture is the pattern of shared values and beliefs that helps its members understand the reasons for what happens, and thus teaches its members the norms of behavior in the organization (Deshpande & Webster, 1989). Hogan & Coote (2014) define organizational culture as norms, organizational values transmitted through artificial objects and observed in behavior patterns. While Guney (2004) expresses the organizational culture as “a whole formed by the organizational policies, strategies, working principles, attitudes and behaviors, roles, values and norms, symbols and traditions”; Kwantes & Boglarsky (2007) defined it as “a particular set of values, beliefs and behaviors that characterizes the way employees and groups interact in progress towards a common goal”. When the common features emphasized in the definitions of organizational culture are considered, it is understood that the organizational, environmental, and individual factors that make up the organizational culture are quite comprehensive. In this sense, it is pointed out in the literature that organizational culture is a multidimensional phenomenon (Ozkalp & Kirel, 2010).

Anxiety is derived from the Latin root "angere" which means "choking, strangulate" (Berkun, 2003). At the same time, anxiety is a signal that informs the person

of the danger and pushes him/her to take measures to cope with this danger (Tukel, 2000). Freud defined anxiety in 1894 as a motivational state and a defensive behavior (Dogan et al., 1995). Anxious states are manifested by restlessness, shortness of breath, and a general state of excitement. The person cannot organize his/her own behavior according to the hierarchy of needs. In short, cannot concentrate (Kuey & Gulec, 1993).

Anxiety is often compared to stress and fear because of its similar responses. The best way to distinguish between stress and anxiety is to look at the trigger. Stress can occur suddenly or temporarily, with a situation that people have difficulty overcoming. Anxiety can arise for no reason and can even be seen around things irrelevant. Factors such as perfectionism, family, financial concerns, inability to fulfill duties and responsibilities at work, failure, challenging job demands, talent and job incompatibility, mobbing, job security concerns, lack of education, hierarchical and mechanical organizational culture can cause performance anxiety in the workplace (Ebadi, 2020).

Developing a result-oriented culture and setting compelling goals causes anxiety in employees. Results-oriented cultural norms make it likely that employees who face challenging goals, difficult task demands, and scarce work resources will experience intense anxiety (Yip et al., 2020). Organizations create common values and norms in order to improve relations among employees and organizational commitment. The existence of these values and norms is very important in terms of maintaining the unity in the organization and regulating social relations. If the norms and attitudes do not comply with the interests and expectations of the members of the organization, problems arise, and anxiety is experienced.

METHODS

This research has a main and a side aim. The side aim is to find out to if there are differences by gender and education in terms of anxiety levels of employees', whereas the main aim is to examine the effect of

between organizational culture on anxiety levels of employees. In other words, this study mainly seeks to understand if and how organizations' culture could affect anxiety levels of employees, as suggested in figure 1.



Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

The hypothesis related to the proposed research model is as follows:

H1: Organizational culture affects the anxiety levels of employees.

H2: There is a significant difference in anxiety levels of employees by gender.

The data was collected from the private sector white collar employees in Istanbul via an online survey. Due to the large number of employees in the research population, a questionnaire was sent to the employees of 10 randomly selected companies that agreed to participate in the research. The sample included 243 respondents.

Questionnaires are used to collect data and consisting of 79 questions and three sections. The first section consists of some demographics questions on gender, age, educational level, and income of the participants. In the second section Beck Anxiety Scale (1988) were used to assess participants' anxiety levels. Beck Anxiety Scale consists of 21 questions. Ulusoy et al. (1998) translated into Turkish. Respondents scored items on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 3 (severely). The

scores were computed by adding up the items and may range from 0–63. Finally, the third section involves the organizational culture profile (OCP), is an instrument developed by O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991).

The organizational culture profile consists of 54 value statements. Each statement is placed in the range of fully reflecting (OCP score = 5) and not reflecting at all (OCP score = 1) organization's culture.

The data was analyzed with SPSS version 22.0. At first, normality test of the scales was evaluated with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Because of the normality assumption was valid, parametric tests were using to determine the statistical significance.

FINDINGS

The participants' descriptive findings are given in Table 1. While just more than half of the participants (51.9%-126 people) were males, 117 (48.1%) participants were females. The most populated age group was the 30-39 age range (53.9%). 20-29 age range (36.2%) was the follow-up them. In terms of levels of education, it was seen that 85.6% of them had a graduate or post-graduate degree.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Gender, Marital Status, Educational Status and Position

Variables		Number	%
Gender	Female	117	48,1
	Male	126	51,9
Age	20-29 years	88	36,2
	30-39 years	131	53,9
	+40 years	24	9,9
Educational Status	High School	15	6,2
	Associate's Degree	20	8,2
	Bachelor's Degree	141	58,0
	Master's Degree/ Doctorate (PhD)	67	27,6

N= 243

Table 2 shows that whether there was a significant difference in anxiety levels of employees by gender analyzed with Independent Sample T-test. According to analyze, there was no statistically significant difference anxiety levels of employees by gender

($p>,05$) (Table 2). As per this finding, research hypothesis 2;

H2: There is a significant difference in anxiety levels of employees by gender, was not supported.

Table 2. Evaluation of Anxiety Levels of Employees According to Gender

Variable	Anxiety (Beck)			
	n	Mean \pm SD	t	p
Gender				
Female	117	1,63 \pm 0,48	-1,118	,265
Male	126	1,70 \pm 0,52		

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to see how the items are statistically converged. In the first EFA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test have used for whether the data is appropriate for factor analysis. And then factor loadings which less than ,5 should are removed. Table 3 shows that seven-factor structure for organizational

culture profile scale. The total variance explained for these factors was found to be 66,947%. The overall reliability level (as measured by Cronbach's Alpha method) is ,970. These factors, similar to the original study, can be listed as follows: (1) aggressive, (2) stable, (3) outcome-oriented, (4) innovative, (5) detail-oriented, (6) team-oriented, and (7) people-oriented.

Table 3. Factor and Reliability Analysis Results of Organizational Culture Profile Scale

KMO: ,854. (Bartlett's test value is statistically significant at 5%)	
Total Variance Explained (%)	66,947
Total Cronbach's Alpha Value	,970
<i>Stable Factor 1 Variance Explained (%)</i>	17,3
<i>People-Oriented Factor 2 Variance Explained (%)</i>	14,9
<i>Outcome-Oriented Factor 3 Variance Explained (%)</i>	8,7
<i>Detail-Oriented Factor 4 Variance Explained (%)</i>	8,5
<i>Aggressive Factor 5 Variance Explained</i>	8,1
<i>Innovative Factor 6 Variance Explained</i>	5,4
<i>Team-Oriented Factor 7 Variance Explained (%)</i>	3,8

Please notice that the items have been rewored and been originally translated into Turkish during data collection.

Table 4 points out that four-factor structure for Beck's anxiety scale. The total variance explained for these factors was found to be 68,396%. The overall reliability level (as measured by Cronbach's Alpha method) is ,930. And the sub-factors are named as follows: (1) general anxiety, (2) acute anxiety and trauma, (3) autonomic anxiety and (4) subjective anxiety.

Table 4. Factor and Reliability Analysis Results of Becks Anxiety Scale

KMO: ,773. (Bartlett's test value is statistically significant at 5%)	
Total Variance Explained (%)	68,396
Total Cronbach's Alpha Value	,930
<i>General Anxiety Factor 1 Variance Explained (%)</i>	21,4
<i>Acute Anxiety and Trauma Factor 2 Variance Explained (%)</i>	21,0
<i>Autonomic Anxiety Factor 3 Variance Explained (%)</i>	13,0
<i>Subjective Anxiety Factor 4 Variance Explained (%)</i>	12,8

Please notice that the items have been rewored and been originally translated into Turkish during data collection.

The last section of the research process try to find out facts about the research aim if organizational culture could effect anxiety levels of employees. Due to the research aim and its accompanying hypotheses, it is

decided that considers the macro (total) level effect of organizational culture on anxiety levels of employees and their sub-dimensions. The findings in Table 5 clearly highlight that there was no significant negative

relationship between the organizational culture and overall anxiety levels of employees. It was also noted

from the regression values that organizational culture was a weak predictor of anxiety ($p > .05$).

Table 5. Results of the Effect of Organizational Culture on the Anxiety Levels of Employees

Dependent Variable: Anxiety Levels (Total)					
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Organizational Culture	,578	1	,578	2,281	,132 ^b
Error	61,059	241	,253		
Total	61,637	242			
a. R Squared = ,009 (Adjusted R Squared = ,005)					
b. Computed using alpha = 0.05					

Table 6 observed that there was a significant relationship between the organizational culture and the subjective anxiety which is the sub-dimension anxiety levels of employees. However, there was no significant relationship between the organizational culture and the other three sub-dimensions of anxiety levels of employees.

Table 6. Results of the Effect of Organizational Culture on the Subjective Anxiety Levels of Employees

Dependent Variable: Subjective Anxiety Levels					
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Organizational Culture	2,333	1	2,333	6,094	,014 ^b
Error	92,274	241	,383		
Total	94,607	242			
a. R Squared = ,025 (Adjusted R Squared = ,00)					
b. Computed using alpha = 0.05					

In this case, the nature of this effects should be evaluated. The result of this evaluation given in Table 7. There is a negative effect ($r = -.157$). As per this finding, organizational culture has a negative effect on subjective anxiety levels of employees.

Table 7. Results of the Effect of Organizational Culture on Subjective Anxiety Levels of Employees

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2,013	,232		8,670	,000
Organizational Culture	-.159	,065	-,157	-2,469	,014

As per this finding, research hypothesis 1;

H1: Organizational culture affects the anxiety levels of employees, was not supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, which was carried out using the norm model of organizational culture, the effect of organizational culture on the anxiety levels of employees was tested and the test result was not supported. When analyzed in terms of sub-dimensions, there was an only significant relationship between the organizational culture and the subjective anxiety which is the sub-dimension of the anxiety levels of employees. Theoretical studies in the field have revealed that organizational culture affects the anxiety levels of employees. However, these results did not hold this true in this study. It can be said that there may be different factors that affect the anxiety levels of employees. When the demographic differences are examined, there was no difference in anxiety levels by gender ($p>.05$), in parallel to the findings of some previous studies (Liu et al., 2020, Chen et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). Due to the high education level of the employees, their anxiety levels might not be affected by the organizational culture. There are several limitations to the present study. First, it may be difficult to generalize our findings because it just conducted in 10 private companies in Istanbul. And the sample size was limited to 243 employees. A larger sample size may give somewhat different results. Second, self-reported questionnaire used; thus, the response bias may have influenced the results. These

limitations of the study are also a suggestion for possible future studies in this field. Data from different samples can also create the possibility of making comparisons between different sectors and cultures.

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