

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACTS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: A CASE STUDY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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## Abstract

Tourism industry in Turkey has been increasing rapidly since the 2000s, especially in hospitality. It has been argued that the development of the industry depends largely on employees' behavior. To understand how employees feel in terms of organizational behavior, it is necessary to refer and examine term of organizational commitment. Psychological contract reflects the belief system of employees to mutual responsibility and obligation between individuals and organizations. There are obvious links between the nature of the psychological contract and the individual's commitments to the organization. This study aims to measure the relationship between psychological contracts and organizational commitment in hospitality establishments. Through this aim, the hypothesis of the study is given below. There is a significant relationship between psychological contracts and organizational commitment in establishments. The data was collected from 375 employees of 10 establishments in Ankara in Turkey. But 340 observations were just used to analyze because of technical problems. Questionnaires consist of 3 parts. The first part has some descriptive information about characteristics of participants. In the second part, there are "psychological contracts questionnaire" for 21 different items. In the last part, there are "organizational commitment questionnaire" for 15 different items. The results of the analyses suggest that there is a negative relationship between psychological contract and organizational commitment. Perception level of psychological contract of the employees with bachelor degree is more positive than the high school degree and lower degrees. Perception level of organizational commitment of the employees with bachelor degree graduate is more positive than the high school degree and the lower degrees. It is remarkable that the employees who work at the food & beverage department have most negative perception about psychological contracts and organizational commitment.

**Key words:** psychological contract, organizational commitment, hospitality industry

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant resources in achieving the organizational objectives is human resource. The extent of the organizational accomplishment through human resources rests with the administrative implementations. Administrative implementations in shaping the behavior and the attitudes of the individuals in an organization form the base for the disciplines of organizational behavior and human

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resources management. These implementations range from motivation, satisfaction, commitment, trust and justice to stress, mobbing, burnout, and perceived violation of psychological contract.

There are a variety of definitions and classifications as to the concept of psychological contract, the independent variable of this study. Psychological contract sets the mutual expectations, belief and unwritten obligations between employees and employers. In this manner, psychological contract organizes the underlying forces in the mutual relationship with an organization and outlines the practical aspects of the job to be performed in a practical manner. The contract, in short, is based on the mutual expectations of both parties. (Rousseau, 1989; Morrison and Robinson, 1997). Psychological contract can be described as an unwritten contract signifying mutual expectations between an organization and individuals (Kotler, 1973).

Psychological contract reflects the belief system of employees to mutual responsibility and obligation between individuals and organizations (Zhou, Plaisent, Zheng, Bernard, 2014). There are obvious links between the nature of the psychological contract and the individual's commitments to the organization. Those with contracts that are predominantly transactional in nature are unlikely to have high levels of organizational commitment (Jose, 2008).

Rather than a formal contract, a psychological contract forms as a result of perceptions through job-related interactions. (Petersitzke, 2009; Büyükyılmaz and Çakmak, 2015). The studies in the related literature suggest that in the event that the conditions of psychological contract are not met, the breach of psychological perception occurs. The violation of the psychological contract is of significant influence on the attitude and behavior of individuals, even though it is not a formal written contract (Turnley and Feldman, 1999) and changes in psychological perception hint some drastic changes in attitudes and behavior (McDonald and Makin, 2000; Dikili and Bayraktaroğlu, 2013). Organizational commitment, the dependent variable of the study, is described as the adoption of the values and the objectives of a given organization and attempts to increase the extent of the adoption of the values and the objectives and the desire to stay at the organization (Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian 1974).

Organizational commitment is a psychological belonging and opens to path for individual to perform more dedicated effort and work (Koç, 2009). Besides, there is empirical evidence that the concepts of pride and respect are related to commitment notion (Boezeman and Ellemers, 2007). Organizational commitment proves a sense of stability and belonging for individuals and this is a positive factor that increases the stressful working conditions (Namasivayam and Zhao, 2007).

The common point of the myriad of studies into organizational commitment is that it is a construct that leads to attitudes and behavior that give rise to positive results for both the organization and employees (Koç, 2009).

In the formation or increase of the perception of organizational commitment, the mutual trust and the sense of justice is a determining factor. In the creation of the mutual trust and the perception of justice as well as the formal and written mutual contract, the

unwritten and the informal mutual contract, i.e. psychological contract, is of central place. Hence, it could be held that in the event of the violation of psychological contract, the perception of organizational commitment can sustain an injury.

Human labor is of key significance in hospitality industry, where employee and client interaction is indispensable. Justice and trust determines the perception of psychological contract. Psychological contract is a latent power in employees' performance. Hence, unwritten promises have great influence that cannot be measured conveniently. In the related literature, although there have been some studies into the relation between psychological contract and organizational commitment, the evidence whether there is a relationship is weak in terms of contributing to the managerial practices. This in mind, this study sets out to examine the relation between psychological contract and organizational commitment and add to the existing literature.

This study aims to measure the relationship between psychological contracts and organizational commitment in hospitality establishments. Thus, the hypothesis of the study is given below:

**H1:** There is a significant relationship between psychological contracts and organizational commitment in establishments.

## METHOD

The population of the study is comprised of 5 star hotels operating in Ankara. In order to test the hypothesis of the study, sampling was used. The questionnaire form consists of three parts. In the first part, there are demographical items. The second part covers 5-item the perceived violation of psychological contract developed by Robinson and Morrison. In the third part, the 15-itemscale of organizational commitment developed by Mowday' Steers and Porter. In order to test the reliability Cronbach's Alpha was used. The reliability coefficients for the items of perceived violation of psychological contract and organizational commitment are 0.77 and 0.92' respectively. The questionnaire form was distributed to 500 hotel employees based on the principle of voluntary participation upon the consent of the managers of hotels. The final number of the questionnaires used in data analysis is 340. On the other hand, in order to test the correlation between the perceived violation of psychological contract and organizational contract, simple regression analysis has been performed.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1.** Demographics

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-25	46	13,5
26-30	69	20,3
31-35	115	33,8

36-40	70	20,6
41 and +	40	11,8
Total	340	100,0
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Female	155	45,6
Male	185	54,4
Total	340	100,0
<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 1 year	21	6,2
2-5	78	22,9
6-10	74	21,8
11-15	97	28,5
16 and +	70	20,6
Total	340	100,0
<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Primary	8	2,4
Secondary	78	22,9
Pre-bachelor's	57	16,8
Bachelor's	197	57,9
Total	340	100,0
<b>Department</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Housekeeping	51	15,0
Front Office	82	24,1
Food and Beverage	118	34,7
Accounting and Purchasing	60	17,6
Human Resources	29	8,5
Total	340	100,0

Table 1 reports the demographics of the participants in the study. The majority of the participants are between 31-35 (33,8 %), male ( 54,4%) and with 11-15 ( 28,5 %) years of experience, with a Bachelor's degree ( 57,9%) and employed at food and beverage department ( 34,7 %).

**Table 2.** Relationship Between Perceived Violation of Psychological Contracts and Organizational Commitment

<b>Perceived Violation of Psychological Contract</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>r<sup>2</sup></b>
	<b>340</b>	<b>,005</b>	<b>-,152</b>	<b>,023</b>

Table 2 reports the correlation between the perceived violation of psychological contract and organizational commitment. It is seen that there is a negative correlation ( $r: -,152$ ) between the constructs under consideration ( $p < 0,05$ ). As the perceived violation of psychological contract increases, the level of organizational commitment decreases (or vice versa), which indicates that the hypothesis of the study is supported.

**Table 3.** Relationship Between Perceived Violation of Psychological Contracts and Organizational Commitment by Age

<b>Perceived Violation of Psychological Contract</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>				
	Age	N	p	r	r <sup>2</sup>
	18-25	46	,448	-,115	,013
	26-30	<b>69</b>	<b>,036</b>	<b>-,253</b>	<b>,064</b>
	31-35	115	,978	,003	,000
	36-40	70	,900	-,015	,000
	41 and +	<b>40</b>	<b>,021</b>	<b>-,364</b>	<b>,133</b>

Table 3 indicates the correlation matrix between the constructs (perceived violation of psychological contract and organizational commitment) by age. There is a negative correlation between the constructs under consideration in 26 – 30 age group and 41 + ( $p < 0,05$ ).

**Table 4.** Relationship Between Perceived Violation of Psychological Contracts and Organizational Commitment by Gender

<b>Perceived Violation of Psychological Contract</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>				
	Gender	N	p	r	r <sup>2</sup>
	Female	<b>155</b>	<b>,001</b>	<b>-,264</b>	<b>,070</b>
	Male	185	,433	-,058	,003

Table 4 indicates the correlation matrix between the constructs by gender. There is a negative correlation between the constructs under consideration in female employees ( $p < 0,05$ ).

**Table 5.** Relationship Between Perceived Violation of Psychological Contracts and Organizational Commitment by Years of Experience

<b>Perceived Violation of Psychological Contracts</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>				
	Total Working Period	N	p	r	r <sup>2</sup>
	Less than 1 year	21	,880	,039	,001
	2-5	78	,121	-,177	,031
	6-10	74	,398	,100	,010
	11-15	<b>97</b>	<b>,030</b>	<b>-,220</b>	<b>,049</b>

16 and +	70	,020	-,277	,077
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Table 5 indicates the correlation matrix between the constructs by experience. There is a negative correlation between the constructs under consideration in those with 11-15 years of experience and 16 years and above ( $p < 0,05$ ).

**Table 6.** Relationship Between Perceived Violation of Psychological Contracts and Organizational Commitment by Education

<b>Perceived Violation of Psychological Contract</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>				
	Education	N	p	r	r <sup>2</sup>
	Primary	8	,653	,190	,036
	Secondary	78	,850	-,022	,000
	Pre-Bachelor's	<b>57</b>	<b>,001</b>	<b>-,435</b>	<b>,189</b>
	Bachelor's	197	,065	-,132	,017

Table 6 indicates the correlation matrix between the constructs by education. There is a negative correlation between the constructs under consideration in those with pre-bachelor's degree ( $p < 0,05$ ).

**Table 7.** Relationship Between Perceived Violation of Psychological Contracts and Organizational Commitment by Department

<b>Perceived Violation of Psychological Contract</b>	<b>Organizational Commitment</b>				
	Department	N	p	r	r <sup>2</sup>
	Housekeeping	51	,150	-,205	,042
	Front Office	82	,830	,024	,001
	Food and Beverage	<b>118</b>	<b>,019</b>	<b>-,215</b>	<b>,046</b>
	Accounting and Purchasing	<b>60</b>	<b>,007</b>	<b>-,344</b>	<b>,118</b>
	Human Resources	<b>29</b>	<b>,049</b>	<b>-,355</b>	<b>,126</b>

Table 7 indicates the correlation matrix between the constructs by department. There is a negative correlation between the constructs under consideration in those employed at the departments of food and beverage department, accounting and purchasing and human resources ( $p < 0,05$ ).

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

There are studies underlining the relationship between psychological contract and organizational commitment. In a similar way, this study also sets out to find whether there is relationship between the perceived violation of psychological contract and organizational commitment. Considering the results obtained, it is observed that there is

a negative correlation between the constructs used in the study. In other words, the perceived violation of psychological contract of hotel employees affects organizational commitment in a negative way.

On the other hand, in terms of the demographic variables, there are relations and differences between the two constructs. Especially in terms of age, it can be concluded that although there is a negative correlation at some certain age groups, this is not applicable to all age groups. Hence, it cannot be shown as evidence that age groups are important variable in terms of the perceived violation of psychological contract

As regards the gender variable, there is significant relationship in females. In other words, there is a negative relationship between the perceived violation of psychosocial contract and organizational commitment. This could be interpreted as a negative effect of perceived violation of psychological contract on organizational commitment. In sum, unwritten mutual promises are a determining factor for females and managers should take this into consideration.

In terms of the duration of employment, there are some significant findings for 11-15 and 16 + years of experience. As the duration of employment increases the perceived violation of psychological contract increases too and the effect on organizational commitment becomes important too. This being the case, in terms of the managerial implications, this should be taken into consideration.

Considering the education variable, there is a significant relationship between the constructs in those holding pre-bachelor's degree. This being the since there is significant relationship only in pre-bachelor's degree, it can be said that education is not a significant variable in the relation between perceived violation of psychological contract and organizational commitment.

As for the variable of department, only in food and beverage, accounting and human resources departments there are significant relationships between the constructs. No significant relationship has been found in the other two front office and housekeeping departments. Hence, department factor makes it difficult to make an overall interpretation considering the department factor.

To sum up, a negative relationship has been found out between the perceived violation of psychological contract and organizational commitment. That is to say, as the perceived violation increases commitment decreases and the vice versa. However, we did not have any statistical findings covering all the aspects of demographic variables.

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