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EFFECT OF LABORERS' OVERQUALIFICATION PERCEPTION ON JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON HEALTH SECTOR IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

Over-qualification perception can be defined briefly as laborers' perception of being overqualified according to requirements of current job. While reasons like globalization, technological developments, increasing population and increasing competition in all markets are causing high unemployment rates especially in developed and developing countries, members of new generations who want to avoid of being unemployed incline on self-development and higher education more and more. While this trend is positively affecting the quality of labor markets unfortunately quality and quantity of suitable jobs are not affected as much. Consequently, many laborer candidate who think that his/her qualifications are more superior for the current jobs are choosing to stay unemployed or unwillingly accepting a job which is unsuitable for his/her educational background or interests. Laborers perception of over-qualification is accepted as one of the antecedents of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which are directly related with employee turnover,

Key Words: Overqualification Perception, Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Health Management.

alienation to job and organization, higher job stress, efficiency and behaviors of counter production. The aim of this study is empirically investigating effect of overqualified laborer perception on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of administrative workers on health sector in Turkish context. Data are collected from 142 administrative laborers working at private

hospitals in Ankara. According to results, having a difference, duration of employment and income appeared as significant variables affecting over-qualification perception addition to education level in health sector. Moreover, over-qualification appeared as an important antecedent of both job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Introduction

Probably education would be at the top of the list if people are asked for solutions for social problems like high crime rates, corruption, inefficacy or unemployment that our societies suffer these days. Following this hypothetical prescription, governments and people are increasing their investments on education year by year. Efficacy of these investments is not subject of this study but for sure, young generations are having higher levels of education. However, together with higher education levels, rates of unemployed people with college degrees are also increasing because numbers of high quality jobs are not increasing as fast. The percentage of higher education graduates inside unemployed population shows significant increase both in the USA, Russia, China, Brazil, Argentina and Finland in comparison with the recent years [1]. Highly educated laborer candidates who do not prefer the available jobs or who deem that these jobs are not suitable for them have been gradually forming an expanding group among the unemployed category for whom employment opportunities do not improve as fast.

In this framework, examining the unemployment statistics according to education level in Turkey, it is shown that higher education graduates constitute the largest group of unemployment with 12,9% [2]. From a different perspective, unemployment ratio among high school, university and post university graduates was 43,6 % in 2008, whereas this rate increased to 51,6 % in 2014 [2]. After a while these people with different educational degrees, different qualities and/or knowledge who could not find a job suitable with

his/her expectations can no longer tolerate the economic, social and psychological pressures of being unemployed and feel forced to choose a job which they do not think suitable for themselves. Khan and Morrow [3], define this kind of people as overqualified laborers (OQL).

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment of OQLs are main topics of this study. Except the study of Erdoğan and Bauer [4] conducted with a retail organization workers in Istanbul and study of [5] conducted with workers from engineering, textile, chemical equipments and food industries there is not any study examining OQLs in Turkish context.

Studies examining OQLs mostly determine that OQLs are more common at service sector than manufacture sector [6], [7], [8]. Considering this fact, administrative workers of private hospitals in Ankara chosen as the sample of this study as representatives of service workers.

The Overqualified Laborer (OQL) Perception

The concept of OQL functionalized in two different ways. The first definition related with perceptions claim that being OQL is only a perception of laborers who deem that their qualifications are much more than needed to conduct the current duties [4], [9]. The second definition is focusing to the facts like job descriptions and official qualifications of laborers that this point of view defines being OQL as having more official qualifications than required in the current job description [10]. In the literature examining behavioral consequences of being OQL, the functionalizing approach focusing on perceptions is more commonly

suggested [11]. In this study we also considered perceptual approach as the main theoretical framework.

Crosby's [12] *Relative Deprivation Theory* is considered as one the main theories to explain effect of OQL perception on individual attitudes and behaviors [13]. According to this theory, it is not enough to consider only the context and situations for understanding and estimating the behaviors of individuals. Situations and conditions might be perceived differently at different times and separately for everybody. So it is perceptions that determine the meanings loaded on context, situation and contingencies [12]. In this framework relative deprivation theory claims that when a person could not reach an object which is highly deserved, this causes a disappointment directly proportional with intense of deserving thought [12]. In this theoretical framework Erdoğan and Bauer [14] claim that, laborers with high objectives about working basis on their high level of education, knowledge, experience, talent or only self-esteem might feel deprivation or disappointment while they are obliged to accept low quality jobs and this kind of perceptions might trigger some negative attitudes like low job satisfaction and intention to quit.

Another well-known theory explaining effect of OQL perception on attitudes and behaviors is Hackman and Oldham's [15] *person-job fit theory*. According to person-job fit concept if the laborer has the qualifications defined as requirements for the job it is more likely that laborer fit to his/her job and display a better performance [16]. Nevertheless, not only having deficient qualities but also having over qualities is something undesired.

There are two approaches conceptualizing OQL with one and two dimensions. First approach consider OQL concept as a unique dimension as mentioned above [4], [17]. Second approach defines two dimensions of OQL as: *mismatch dimension* – perceived lack of match between laborer qualifications and job requirements, and *no-grow dimension* – a

perceived stable job environment with lower opportunities to learn new things or promote [13], [18]. In this study, we considered unique-dimension approach.

Organizational behavior researches related with OQL concept commonly reach the results that OQL has negative relations with job satisfaction, organizational commitment and positive relation with intention to quit [13], [19], [20].

OQLs are considered to be inconvenient and refused by employers especially for low skilled or unchallenging works in general [21]. The researches on employers for the reasons of refusal of overqualified candidates reveal that employers frequently affirming such candidates would demand for more remuneration and early promotion, wouldn't like to work with the managers who have less experience and information, wouldn't adopt to their work easily, wouldn't be motivated effortlessly and would quit their jobs once they receive a better job offer [20], [22]. For these reasons, employers might display a tendency to choose candidates who mostly suit to requirements of job, no less and not more [13].

Although over-qualification is considered as a negative characteristic for employees at HRM literature [19], [20] some researchers suggest that this kind of employees might turn into valuable assets for organizations by some HRM applications like employee empowerment, job enlargement, job enrichment, target oriented job contracts [1], [13], [14].

OQL Perception and Job Satisfaction

By a simple definition, job satisfaction is the degree of contentment of laborers from the job [23]. Low job satisfaction may result in high turnover rates, absenteeism, intention to quit, low organizational commitment, alienation, work stress, counter production behaviors like damaging machines or facilities, mental and physical health problems along with inefficiency [24]. Job satisfaction is generally discussed in terms of internal and external dimensions.

However, the recent studies reveal that some other dimensions like social satisfaction and satisfaction from supervisors might be added to job satisfaction phenomenon [25]. The internal dimension of job satisfaction is related to emotional satisfaction from the work itself; the external dimension is related to the situation of harmonization of the concrete outputs of the work with the expectations of the laborer whereas the social dimension is being contented with the colleagues and supervisor satisfaction is related with satisfaction from supervisors [26].

Job satisfaction is generally considered with single dimension in the studies carried out as an output of OQL perception with a negative relation [13], [14], [26]. However, it is possible to reach different results if job satisfaction taken into account with its sub-dimensions like inner, external and social satisfaction. Because, even though there is no inner and external satisfaction employee may have compatible relations with the colleagues tolerating other problems. Considering the fact that employees of administrative services in health sector like doctor assistants, secretaries and information desk consultants are mostly women they might have close and sincere relations with each other and might have high social satisfaction even they are not glad with internal and external outputs of work. Satisfaction from supervisors might be considered as another dimension of job satisfaction. Although it is hard to estimate the effect of supervisors in this pattern, it is envisioned that they would be in a type of interaction similar to social satisfaction. The hypotheses that have been produced in this framework are listed below:

H-1: OQL perception has a meaningful but negatively relation with inner satisfaction.

H-2: OQL perception has a meaningful but negatively relation with external satisfaction.

H-3: OQL perception has a meaningful and positive relation with social satisfaction.

H-4: OQL perception has a meaningful and positive relation with satisfaction from supervisor.

OQL Perception and Organizational Commitment

Salancik [27], defines organizational commitment as an individual attitude that covers variables like occupational commitment in the framework of organization, loyalty to organization, beliefs about organizational values. Organizational commitment is a desired employee attitude that it is highly correlated with positive organizational characteristics and attitudes like organizational identity, employee satisfaction, belonging perception, security and trust perceptions [17]. Organizational commitment has also strong relations with person-job fit, fear of being unemployed, normatively feelings about organization and emotionally commitment to organization [17], [28].

Organizational commitment mostly taken into models with its three sub dimensions as affective, normative and continuance commitment conceptualized and functionalized by Allen and Mayer [29]. In this framework: “*affective commitment is defined as denoting an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization, normative commitment reflects a perceived obligation to remain in the organization and continuance commitment means denoting the perceived costs associated with leaving the organization*” [30].

In the *job characteristics model* of Hackman and Oldham [15], match between expectancies and job characteristics are defined as prior antecedent of employee efficiency. Considering person-job fit theory and job characteristics model, personal expectancies based on perceptions about personal characteristics can be defined as an important antecedent of organizational commitment. Supporting this hypothesis it is revealed in the literature that OQL perception is negatively correlated with organizational commitment [11], [28], [31]. However comparing OQL perception with organizational commitment’s sub dimensions, depart

from other two dimensions, continuance commitment is positively correlating with OQL perception [31]. Considering definitions and theory, positioning normative commitment close to continuance commitment seems more logical in this interaction model. Consequently, we expect that administrative laborers of private hospitals who perceive themselves as overqualified for their positions might be not affectively committed to their hospitals but their continuance commitment and normative commitments might be higher. Hypotheses formed in this framework are listed below.

Research Model

Research model and hypotheses are displayed at Figure-1.

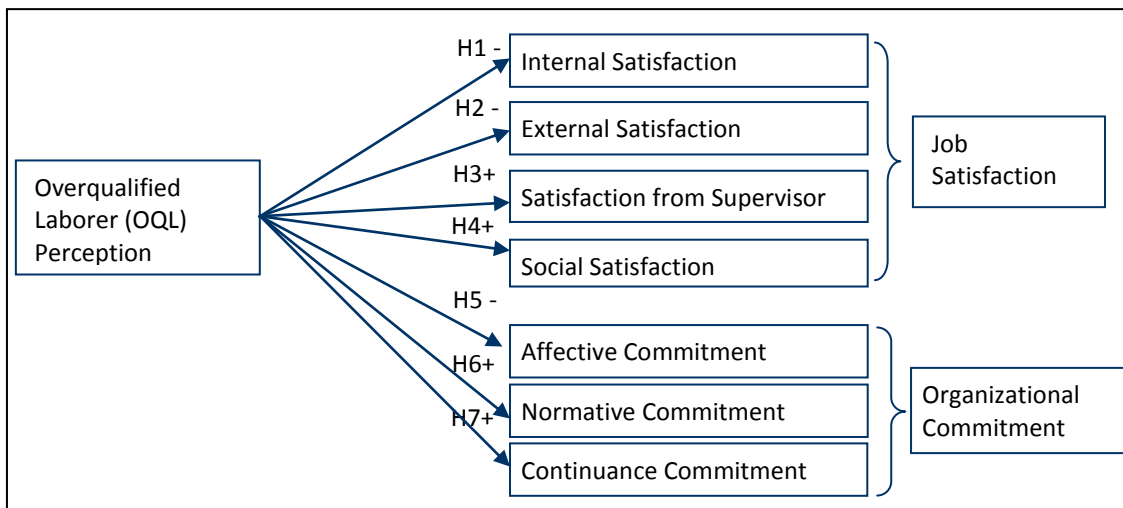


Figure-1: Research Model and Hypotheses

METHOD

The Sample

The research purposes to perform in a sample that includes individuals who operate in service industry, with no specific technical education for work; but also with different age, gender, educational background and work experience. The discussions among the researchers has resulted that the best group which demonstrates those characteristics is the workers at “executive branch” in hospitals. In order to test this hypothesis, the OL perception scale has been implemented to 32 administrative worker of a private

H-5: OQL perception has a meaningful but negatively relation with affective commitment.

H-6: OQL perception has a meaningful and positive relation with normative commitment.

H-7: OQL perception has a meaningful and positive relation with continuance commitment.

hospital in Ankara as a pilot research. The results have showed that the ratio of OL perception is 65 percent, which is sufficient for our research. Therefore, we have decided to perform the research in private hospitals.

In accordance with the data provided by The Ministry of Health, there are 355 general hospitals throughout Turkey, 21 of which are located in Ankara. Around 1250 staff, including physician assistants as well as consultants, are employed in these hospitals [32]. Six of the private hospitals in Ankara accepted our offer for research, in this way we reached 227 consultants and physician assistants. Accordingly, the

general universe of the research consists of managerial staff of private hospitals in Turkey, while the research universe is based on the managerial staff of 21 general private hospitals in Ankara. On the other hand, the sample involves the managerial staff of only six of those hospitals.

Within the context of the research, the participants are asked to answer questions in 227 survey sheets, out of which 142 forms are worthy of the research to use, with the validity rate of 62,55 %. 52% out of those participants (74 people) are married, whereas 45% (64 people) are single and 3% (4 people) are divorced. The average for age is 28.2, while the most of the participants are within the range of 26 and 30. On the education side of the research, it is founded that 28 participants have been graduated from secondary schools, while 38 participants have high school degree. Additionally, 44 participants have college degree, whereas 22 of the participants have a degree of undergraduate of graduate school. Only 10 people have not indicated their degree of education. 38% out of the sample have been working at their institution less than a one-year period; on the other hand, the rate of the staff working at the hospital for ten years of more is around 8.25%. The average level of income ranges between 1,000-1,500 TL.

Scales

The Overqualified Laborer Scale: In our research, the four-sectioned scale, which developed by Johnson and Johnson [9] and translated into Turkish by Erdoğan and Bauer [4], is applied ($\alpha=.72$). The scale, which is a 6-point Likert scale with only one dimension, includes questions such as “my education level exceeds my job”, “I cannot perfectly use my capabilities in my current job”. In our study total reliability of the scale determined as $\alpha=.818$.

Job Satisfaction Scale: The Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale, which developed by Weiss et.al [32] and translated in Turkish by Baycan [33], is used in order to determine the job satisfaction degree of the employees. The scale has two dimensions and consists

of 20 items (internal satisfaction and external satisfaction). The scale, which is implemented as a 6-point Likert scale, includes statements such as “I like to work in this place”, “I like my job”. The items of 1,2,3,4,7,8,9,10,11,15,16 and 20 addresses the internal satisfaction, while the items of 5,6,12,13,14,17,18 and 19 determines the external satisfaction. In this research, the 5 items out of the external satisfaction form two different dimensions. Two of these statements are related to the satisfaction for the supervisors (items 5 & 6), whereas the other three items (number 17,18, 19) are associated with the satisfaction of social relations in workplace. Accordingly, the third dimension is called “the satisfaction over the supervisor”, while the fourth dimension is named as “social satisfaction”. In our study total reliability of the scale determined as $\alpha=.844$. Reliability results of sub dimensions as internal satisfaction, external satisfaction, satisfaction from supervisor and social satisfaction are $\alpha=.945$, $\alpha=.849$, $\alpha=.778$ and $\alpha=.746$ in order.

Organizational Commitment Scale: The commitment of the employees is determined through the 18-item scale developed by Meyer and Allen [30] and translated into Turkish by Wasti [34]. The scale consists of emotional, continuance and normative commitment dimensions. Each dimension consists of 6 items. The total reliability degree of the research is $\alpha=.872$ and emotional, continuance and normative commitment’s reliability results are $\alpha=.933$, $\alpha=.844$, $\alpha=.901$ in order.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data is analyzed through IBM-SPSS-21 program. The data, except the variable of gender, significantly fits to normal distribution. Most of the participants are female due to the job characteristics of the sample group. Confirmatory factor analysis and correlation analysis are implemented in order to determine the dimensions of the scales and the relationship between the variables. Beside, t-test and one-way ANOVA analysis are implemented in order to

determine the OQL perception as well as the differences among groups depending on demographic data.

In accordance with the results of the research, the 64,78% of the participants (92 participants) evaluates themselves as overqualified for their jobs. There is no significant differentiation among the OL perception for

the gender, the hospital, the marital status and the age; whereas there are significant differentiations among the OL perception for the education level, the working period and the monthly income.

As seen on Table 4, when the education level increases, the OL perception increases, as well.

Table-4: relationship between education level and OQL			
F=3,370; p=0,021<0,05			
Education level	OL perception-Average	N	Standard Deviation
Secondary school	3,0357	28	1,00396
High school	3,3026	38	1,22909
College	3,8409	44	1,42964
Undergraduate	3,9091	22	1,27836
Total	3,5265	132	1,30042

The same relationship can be recognized between the working period and the OL perception, as well as between the income and the OL perception. In this context, the participants with less or more working period as well as the participants with low or high income identifies themselves as “less OL”. Table 5 and Figure 1 demonstrates the change in the OL perception against the income level, while Table 6 and Figure 2

shows the change in the OL perception against the working period

Table-5: Relationship between monthly income and OQL			
F=3,017; p=0,013<0,05			
Monthly income (TL)	OL perception-Average	N	Standard Deviation
0-999	1,9375	8	,60872
1000-1499	3,5227	66	1,44430
1500-1999	3,8750	28	1,23884
2000-2499	3,4167	12	1,30268
3000 & over	2,7500	4	1,44338
Total	3,4426	122	1,39242

Table-6: Relationship between working duration and OQL			
F=4,398; p=0,000<0,001			
Working period (year)	OL perception-Average	N	Standard Deviation
1-2 Years	3,258	62	1,29350
3-5 Years	4,066	30	1,18322
7-10 Years	4,035	14	,68139
11-13 Years	3,100	10	,64550
16,00	2,5000	2	,00000
21,00	2,0000	2	,00000
Total	3,5458	120	1,30649

3. Cont. Comm it.	,218**	,319**	$\bar{x}:3,43$ SS:0,99										
4. Norm. Comm it.	,017	,289**	,081	$\bar{x}:3,78$ SS:1,16									
5. Int. Satis.	-,169*	,083	-,106	,413**	$\bar{x}:4,21$ SS:0,97								
6. Ext. Satis.	-,010	,033	,004	,197*	,263**	$\bar{x}:2,92$ SS:0,90							
7.Satis. From Superv .	,039	,039	-,017	,103	-,373**	,490**	$\bar{x}:2,97$ SS:0,85						
8.Sos. Satis.	,179*	-,028	,149	,336**	,097	,272**	,114	$\bar{x}:3,72$ SS:1,08					
9. Work Durat.	-,103	-,025	,078	,026	,194*	-,003	-,224*	-,304*	$\bar{x}:4,16$ SS:4,43				
10. Edu.	,456**	-,177*	,018	,124	,141*	-,277**	,047	,211*	,106	Y.Okul SS:1,07			
11. Salary	-,080	-,029	,063	,003	,056	-,058	,050	,120	,277**	,046	1250T L SS:1500		
12.Org .Com m.	-,068	,539**	,445**	,739**	,336**	,131	,067	,274*	,057	-,064	-,091	$\bar{x}:3,51$ SS:0,68	
13.Job Satis.	-,109	,142	,086	,542**	,871**	,112	-,080	,442*	,072	,078	,197*	,449**	$\bar{x}:3,82$ SS:0,60

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01 level of meaningful correlation

Table-7: Correlation table

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Sig.	R ²	F	B	S.E.	β
OLP	Affective Commitment	,003**	,062	9,273	-,254	,095	-,233
OLP	Continuance Commitment	,039*	,030	4,347	,197	,073	,218
OLP	Normative Commitment	,848	,000	,037	,017	,086	,017
OLP	Internal Satisfaction	,034*	,032	4,609	-,189	,079	-,169
OLP	External Satisfaction	,535	,003	,387	-,041	,067	-,010
OLP	Satisfaction from Supervisor	,389	,005	,748	,055	,063	,039
OLP	Social Satisfaction	,057	,026	3,673	,147	,071	,135

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01

Table-8: Regression Analysis

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Although there are hundred thousands of job opportunities at labor markets, the reasons of increase at unemployment rates can be explained by not admiring the current jobs due to rising education level at young generations [13]. Beside this, having qualifications more than required can become an obstacle on the perspective of employer [22]. OQL perception might occur not only at highly educated unemployed laborer candidates but also at the employees who gained extra qualifications during their working periods and developed herself/himself over time. If OQL perception does not balanced with other factors over time can cause negative work attitudes like low satisfaction, low commitment, counter productive behaviors, high work stress, and high turn over rates for organizations [4]. As the results of OQL studies show that, OQL perception will gain more importance in business life and human resources management for the next years.

In this study, the OQL perception of the administrative staff of health sector and its effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment examined in the context of Turkey. Although, we do not have a hypothesis about effect of demographic variables on OQL perception, some important results were found.

First, educational status is presented as one of the most important cause of OQL perception in the

literature [13], [31]. Harmonious with these results we also detected a strong relationship between education level and the OQL perception ($r=.456$, $p<0,01$). As shown in Table-4, grouping the participants according to their education, the average level of the highest OQL perception was found at the graduated participants, followed by undergraduates, high school and junior school graduates. However, education level should not be regarded as the equivalent or the unique reason of the OQL perception. According to results of this study while the percentage of participants with OQL perception who are graduated from universities is 54%, this ratio is 61% for junior school graduates.

Although there is not a direct relationship between the OQL perception and monthly income and duration of employment, while participants are grouped according to their income, duration of employment and OQL perceptions, the graphics show a bell curve. Thus, the ones who have low duration of employment and income do not feel over qualified. While duration of employment and income increases, the OQL perception is also increasing. But when the income and duration of employment is more increased, the OQL perception restart decreasing (Figure-1 and 2). Although this bell curve might be result of several causes, we determine that primer reason is perceptions about challenges of the job. Considering the fact that new starters would not have enough experience about the challenges of their work they are not able to make realistic evaluations. As well the experienced employees who

realize the real competences of their job do not evaluate themselves as overqualified. However, we are aware that more evidence needs to support this argument. Other variables like self-efficacy, psychological capital, cultural values etc. may also be affective in this results.

Organizational commitment is one of the most researched attitudes in OQL literature [13], [14]. It is common to face with a negative correlation between OQL perception and organizational commitment [11], [35]. In this study, although the participants have organizational commitment above the average ($x=3,51$), no direct relationship found between OQL perception and organizational commitment. However, when the organizational commitment was taken with its sub-dimensions, a significant negative correlation detected between OQL perception and affective commitment ($r= -0,249$, $p<0,01$), and a significant positive correlation detected between OQL perception and continuance commitment ($r= 0,174$, $p<0,01$). With these results, we evaluate that, the employees who see themselves as overqualified, stay in her/his current job because of not having a better alternative. Therefore, these employees do not develop an affective commitment to their organizations.

Job satisfaction is another variable commonly located at OQL research models [36], [37]. Commonly a negative relation between job satisfaction and OQL perception is detected in these researches. Although it is possible to say that the participants are highly satisfied from their current job in general ($x= 3,82$) and highly feel themselves as over qualified ($x= 3,54$) we could not detect any significant correlation between job satisfaction and OQL perception. But, in this study, we added job satisfaction to our model with its sub dimensions. But examining the interaction of sub dimensions with OQL perception we detected that OQL perception is negatively related with internal job satisfaction ($r=-0,169$, $p<0,05$) and positively related with social satisfaction ($r=0,179$, $p<0,05$). Internal satisfaction, is the sub dimension of job satisfaction

focusing to work itself and the feelings of the employee while doing the work, includes the matters like gaining the outputs expected from organization, opportunity to work independently, congruence between personal values and organization's ethical values, availability to display creativity, and attract of job itself [38]. The low level of internal satisfaction of the participants with high OQL perception can be linked to the idea of feeling useless in the current job although having outstanding qualities and perception of lack of harmony about social statute of current job and the job that expected. Another important output of the research is positive correlation between OQL perception and social satisfaction, which is related with being glad with colleagues [26]. Social satisfaction averages are higher at the participants with higher OQL perceptions. The reasons of this relation can be listed as the gladness from the facilities of the workplace, good relationship among the employees with similar perspectives, developing a common identity as colleagues and participating same feelings.

In this study, we tried to examine OQL perception as a new concept developed at recent years and rarely handled in Turkish context. We researched effect of demographic variables to OQL perception and its relation with job satisfaction and organizational commitment both with their sub dimensions. In this process, we witnessed the fact that, OQL perception of employees might be related with many different attitudes. In order to utilize the qualifications (at least perceived qualifications) of these employees and diminish negative effects of this perception questions like; What kind of leadership approaches and human resource management styles should be exhibited to these employees?, How these employees can be retained and their efficiency and performance can be maintained? are some of the main questions which should be answered in future researches.

There are some limitations should be considered about the study. First, it is a cross-sectional research and data is gathered from self-reports. Because of

these reasons, the results might be affected by common method variance. In addition, the sample represents only the private sector and hospitals in Ankara. Thus, findings are limited to location, time and sample. Although number of sample might be considered enough for statistical analysis, it is more than being assertive to generalize the results. For future researches, it is recommended that, enlarging the research with different occupations from different regions. Also other behavioral variables like; personality traits, kind of graduated schools, family

income, human resources management applications of organizations, leadership attitudes of supervisors, organizational culture, organizational climate, entrepreneurship etc. can be added to models. Also mediator, moderator and direct effects of OQL perception on performance, organizational justice perception, organizational citizenship behavior and some other variables can be examined in future researches.

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