

**Relationship Between Organizational  
Commitment and Organizational Identification:  
A Theoretical Investigation**

*Örgütsel Özdeşleşme ve Örgütsel Bağlılık İlişkisini  
İncelemeye Yönelik Teorik Bir Çalışma*

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## Relationship Between Organizational Commitment and Organizational Identification: A Theoretical Investigation

### Örgütsel Özdeşleşme ve Örgütsel Bağlılık İlişkisini İncelemeye Yönelik Teorik Bir Çalışma

**Başak Aydem ÇİFTÇİOĞLU**

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#### Özet:

*Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, örgütsel bağlılık ve örgütsel özdeşleşme kavramlarının ilişkisini teorik olarak ortaya koymaktır. Günümüz örgütlerinin en önemli sorunu yetkin işgücünü örgütte tutmak için çalışanlar ile örgüt arasında duygusal bağ ya da duygusal bağlamda anlamlı ilişkiler kurmaktır. Çalışanın örgüt ile kurduğu duygusal bağ, yazında bağlılık, özdeşleşme, aidiyet ve içselleştirme gibi kavramlarla tanımlanmaktadır. Çalışanın örgütüne ilişkin olarak geliştirdiği duygusal bağ, örgütsel psikoloji yazınında örgütsel bağlılık kavramı ile tanımlanırken, sosyal kimlik kuramı bağlamında kurgulanan araştırmalarda örgütsel özdeşleşme kavramı ile ifade edilmektedir. Söz konusu bakış açısı farklılığı kavramların kullanımında bir karmaşaya neden olmaktadır. Bu kapsamda çalışmada kavramlar arasındaki ilişki, benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları bağlamında teorik olarak incelenmektedir.*

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Özdeşleşme, Örgütsel Özdeşleşme, Bağlılık, Örgütsel Bağlılık, Duygusal Bağlılık

#### Abstract:

*Main purpose of this study is investigating the conceptual differences between organizational commitment and organizational identification. Today's main problem of organizations is to provide emotional bond or emotional meaning between employees and organization for keeping talent individual in organizations. Employee's attachments to an organization may manifest itself in many different forms such as commitment, identification, loyalty and internalization. Organizational psychology literature studies have used organizational commitment where some of researches which were based on social identity theory prefer organizational identification to examine employees' emotional relationship between their organizations which in turn enhance conceptual confusion between concepts. Main purpose of this study is to theoretically investigate concepts relationships either similarities nor differences.*

**Key words:** Identification, Organizational Identification, Commitment, Organizational Commitment, Affective Commitment

## 1. Introduction

Changes in market structure and new strategies in organizational construction, such as mergers and acquisitions, along with new approaches to work, such as working in teams, hiring temporary workers who work from home, and dealing with multiple workers' individual practices have brought about changes in the working environment, thereby making it necessary to change the rules of the working environment (Morrow, 1993:166-169). On the macro level, the working environment is becoming more and more complex. The more dynamic the work environment, the more organic the organization becomes. On the micro level, organizational boundaries are becoming more transparent, with employees from more diverse cultural backgrounds. Employees with differing expectations and values increasingly populate all levels of work organizations. Thus, organizations need more common values, goals and identities for managing such diversities and entities need to answer the question "who we are" or "who am I" in order to interact effectively with other entities. (Albert et.al., 2000:13-14) Environmental adaptation strategies and new organizational structures facilitate productivity and efficiency for top managers of employees whose job descriptions contain ambiguity or uncertainty. In particular, the flattening of hierarchies and the outsourcing of technology-based product process cause mass dismissals, which damage the trust between employees and employers. (Albert et.al., 2000:14) So instead of coping with job uncertainty, employees prefer committing other individual variables such as their knowledge and skills rather than committing to an organization. (Blau, 2001a: 281) Employees give priority to their individual goals rather than organizational goals; they start to evaluate the value of their skills and experiences, and look outside the organization for job alternatives. This results in a high voluntary employee turnover rate for organizations. This new attitude in the workplace workforce has caused a shortening of employees' tenure in organizations.

Thus the main problem faced by the modern organization is how to provide an environment which facilitates the development of emotional bonds among workers and between employers and employees. Such a bond is necessary to keep individual talent in an organization. In organizational literature, the emotional attachment or bond between an employee and an organization is referred to as "organizational commitment," whereas social psychologists prefer the term "organizational identification." From the 1980s onward, the psychological link between individual and organization has been referred to as organizational commitment, which is defined as a structure that binds an individual to a course of action. Organizational commitment is a mind-set in which an individual considers his own goals and values congruent with his organization. Social psychology refers to this emotional attachment as organizational identification, which is defined as employees' "perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization" (Mael and Ashforth, 1992:103-123) Organizational identification occurs when an individual has adapted organizational goals to his own identity and begins to use organizational features to describe himself. (Pratt, 1998:173) On the other hand, organizational commitment occurs when an individual accepts organizational goals and values, and displays individuals to willingness to invest effort in the organization, expressing a desire to be a part of or a member of the organization (Mowday et.al., 1979:227). Empirical studies suggest that organizational commitment has positive effects on job satisfaction, job involvement, willingness to do extra work, and low turnover intention. (Steers 1977:52; Marhiue and Zajac, 1990:171-194; Randall, 1990:361-378; Cohen, 1992:539-558; Cohen, 1993:1140-1157, Riketta, 2002:257-266; Meyer et.al., 2002:20-52) And researches findings also showed that organizational identification has positive correlation with job satisfaction, job involvement and remain intention in organization. (Hall and Schneider, 1972:346-347, Van Dick et al., 2004:356; Bomber and Iyler,

2002:34 ; Mignonacet. et.al, 2006:485; Riketta, 2005:364; Cole and Brunc, 2006:598 ) Similar definitions and work outcomes were enhanced prejudice among academics, consulting firm or HR practionaries that assess organizational identification and commitment with in the same criteria. However, recent research makes a distinction between these concepts and clarifies the complexity of the conceptualization of organizational commitment and identification. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to investigate theoretical assumptions to clarify the differentiations of concepts and establishing a framework for further research.

## 2. Concept of Organizational Commitment

In general, the meaning of commitment is a stabilizing or obliging force that gives direction to behavior (restricts freedom, binds the person to course of action). In this framework, commitment is a mind-set in which certain antecedents and consequences steer an individual to a particular course of action; commitment, however, is not to be confused with motivation. (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001: 301) Organizational commitment is what drives an individual to remain in an organization (Marsh and Mannari, 1977:70-71; Cohen, 1993:1147) and demonstrate a willingness or desire too contribute to the organization by investing personal effort. Organizational commitment is associated with positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational effectiveness and performance. (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990: 177-181; Angle and Perry, 1981:8)

Morrow found that more than twenty-five different definitions of organizational commitment in various sources of literature. (Oliver, 1990:10) While reviewing these definitions, Morrow found that two distinct theoretical orientations emerged: calculative or instrumental and psychological orientations. (Steven et. al., 1978:381) The calculative perspective is based upon exchange theory, which states that organizational commitment depends on the consequences of the

exchange in the relationship between an individual and a working organization. (Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1972:556) Thus, the degree of employee commitment toward the organization depends on the exchange partners, such as the employer's and the employee's satisfaction with the exchange process. (Blau, 1989: 160-164) Katz and Kahn highlighted the same process and claimed that commitment is shaped by intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that individuals get from a working organization. (Katz and Kahn, 1977:436) This perspective assumed that an individual negotiates and bargains with his organization to produce a positive balance of rewards and costs that they incur in the organization. (Berge, 1988:117) Becker, a well-known defender of this perspective, put forth the notion of side bets, which were investments of an employee's time or effort to the working organization. Such investments seem to develop a sense of organizational commitment in an employee. Becker postulated that employees stay and commit to their organizations in order to recycle their investments and enjoy the lasting benefits of the investments that they have made over the years. Employees remain in organizations to reap the fruits of their investments and increase the rewards gained from the organization. As time passes and investments increase, individuals will be more committed to the organization, as they could lose more by leaving the organization. (Becker, 1960:32-40)

On the other hand, a psychological perspective describes organizational commitment as an emotional relationship between two entities, such as the relationship between employee and organization. In sociological aspects, commitment is generalized as a social actor (employee) desiring to give his energy and loyalty to an organization. (Kanter, 1968: 500) In organizational behavior literature, organizational commitment is defined by Steers as internalization of organizational goals and values, willingness to invest effort in the organization and a sense of belongingness manifested as a wish to stay

(Steers, 1977: 46) According to Sheldon, commitment is an attitude or an orientation towards the organization which resembles the identity of a person to the organization. (Sheldon, 1971:143-144) For Buchanan, commitment covers partisans' behavior, which accepts the goals and values of the organization by ignoring their own benefits. (Buchanan, 1974:533) O'Reilly and Caldwell defined commitment as a psychological bond between employees and their employer which maintains a psychological foundation that is a consistent line of activity. (O'reily and Caldwell, 1981:598) Organizational commitment has typically been viewed as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization as well as the willingness to exert effort and remain in the organization" (Feris and Aranya, 1983:87) In the light of these various definitions there are three behaviors which characterize organizational commitment. (Mowday et. al., 1979:227)

- a. acceptance of organizational goals and values
- b. willingness to invest effort in an organization
- c. willingness to be a part or a member of an organization, along with a desire to remain in the organization.

Some researchers have added a normative perspective to the definition of organizational commitment. These researchers claim that commitment involves a sense of obligation or moral responsibility. A committed employee considers it morally right to be loyal to his company considering the advantages given to him by the firm over time. (Marsh and Mannari, 1977:59) Commitment behaviors are socially accepted behaviors that are the result of internalized normative pressures. Organizations invest in employees by improving their welfare through their membership in the organization. Thus, employees feel an obligation or moral responsibility to the organization based on reciprocity of feelings which, in turn, foster

commitment to the organization. (Wiener, 1982: 421)

This orientation has served a multi-dimensional approach to organizational commitment for addressing complex constructs of commitment. Some authors suggest two-dimensional approaches, such as value commitment and commitment to stay or continuous commitment. (Angle and Perry: 1981:1; Meyer and Schoorman, 1992:672-674; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001:304) Others define commitment as attitude towards the organization, proposing three-distinct forms. One form is compliance, which occurs when an individual's attitude and behavior is adapted to an organization in order to gain rewards. This is the main assumption of instrumental or calculative commitment. The second form of identification occurs when an individual accepts organizational influences for the purpose of maintaining a satisfactory relationship with the organization. Finally, the third form is internalization, which occurs when organizational influences are accepted by an individual because of the attitudes and behaviors that one is being encouraged to adopt are congruent with an individual's existing values. (Caldwell and Chatman, 1990:247)

Due to a lack of consensus on existing conceptualization of organizational commitment, Meyer and his colleagues suggested three-dimensional models for organizational commitment based on existing perspectives assumptions. (Meyer et. al., 1990:710) Researchers suggest that commitment binds an individual to an organization, and has a psychological structure that maintains an employee's interaction with his organization, driving an employee to make the decision to remain in an organization. (Meyer and Allen, 1991:67) According to researchers, organizational commitment has three forms; affective, continuous, and normative. Affective commitment is characterized by emotional attachment, which is defined as an employee's involvement and identification with an organization. An employee remains in an organization because he "wants

to". Continuous commitment is defined as an employee's awareness of the cost associated with leaving the organization. Thus, the employee stays in an organization because he "needs to". And finally, normative commitment represents a feeling of obligation to continue employment. The employee stays in an organization because he feels he "ought to" stay. (Meyer and Allen, 1990: 67) Meyer and Allen argue that all three components of commitment are related but distinguished from each other. (Meyer et. al., 1993: 539)

### 3. Concept of Identification

Identification is a process through which an individual establishes his ideal self by modeling himself after someone whom he admires. In Psychology, the notion of identification was first conceptualized by Sigmund Freud. Based on experiences with his patients, Freud put forth the idea that as a child grows up; he will at some point begin to adopt the characteristics of one parent. Even very young babies identify with other people by recognizing their own traits in them. Over time a child begins to model himself after someone whom he considers to be ideal (usually the parent of the same sex). Identification begins with the affinity a child feels for an individual model, such as his mother, father, or a teacher, and eventually expands to include admired teachers, mentors, and other significant role models in the child's life. Through interaction with these individual models, the child is able to develop and eventually construct his own unique separate identity.

In social psychology literature, identification is used by Tajfel and Turner to refer to the process of forming social groups. It is defined by Kelman as a special type of behavior that individuals resort to under social pressure. In Kelman's studies on attitude change, identification occurs as a result of three different forms of social influence. Kelman describes an individual's reaction to a situation in which social pressure is a factor as compliance, identification and internalization. Identification occurs when an individual ac-

cepts social influences because he wants to establish or maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship with other persons or groups. He adapts the induced behavior because he feels it is important to have good relationships with those whom he likes and values. (Kelman, 1958: 53) In this sense, identification is a behavior adopted from others to establish meaningful relationship with them. (Kelman, 1961: 63)

Tajfel and Turner used identification to analyze the forming of social groups and the social group's effects on an individual's behavior. Based on their Social Identification Theory, a social group is defined as "a collection of individuals who perceive them self to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about evaluation of their group and of their membership in it." So groups are an aggregate of individuals who communicate with each other and show similar features (norms, benefits) or share similar goals. (Carmeli, 2005: 460) According to researchers, an individual's behavior with those outside a given group will be different from the behavior he displays inside the group, which is cognitively controlled by self-concept. The self has two sub-components, or includes two-identities. Personal identity involves psychological, mental, and physical features and capacities of an individual; whereas social identity refers to an individual's formal or informal group memberships, such as gender, occupation, religion. When an individual defines himself based on his membership in a group, or uses a particular group's features for self-definition, social identification occurs. It is social identification which gives individuals a sense of place in society. (Arkonaç, 1993:25-27) Thus identification is an active process which enables an individual to form a connection with the society in which he lives, or link himself to social actor elements. (Cheney, 1983:342)

According to Social Identity Theory, the question of "Who am I?" is important for individuals, and categorized answers to this

question start the social identification mechanism. The social categorization process sets the type of social identity preferred by an individual. Categorization is a cognitive process that enables a person to classify and simplify external stimuli in order to acclimate himself to his environment. An individual categorizes features of his environment, his social groups, himself and other individuals according to their similar features. (Self-Categorization Theory) If features of formal and informal groups are attractive or appealing to an individual, he will tend to identify himself with this group, which means that social identification has occurred. According to researchers, individuals are motivated to achieve a positive self-image and high self-esteem, which can be enhanced by being a member of a socially valued group, or by a positively evaluation of one's own group. Very generally, individuals are motivated to establish positively valued identity differences between in-group and relevant out-group. (Turner et.al., 1979: 190) Thus, social identification of individuals depends on social categorization and categorized group prestige.

#### 4. Organizational Identification

As social identifications form a base for individuals' attitudes and behaviors, organizational identification similarly constitute and shape employees' attitudes and behaviors towards organizations. (Van Kippenberg and Van Schie, 2000:138) Organizational identification was first used in organization literature by March and Simon's motivation study in 1958 as a comparison of organizations' and individuals' goals. According to researchers, human beings are entities that can evaluate their situations and accept other entities' goals. So managers cannot force organizational goal to the individuals, they can only accepted organizational goals upon them with organizational activities which facilitate the socialization process. The assimilation of the goals of an organization and an individual is referred to by March and Simon as organizational identification. Thus, organizational identification is an integra-

tion of organizational goals to an employee's personal goals. (March and Simon, 1958: 65)

Based on social identity theory identification is defined as the self-representation of an individual with it's relations between self and social object. In this sense, organizational identification is dependent on maintaining satisfaction through activities which make possible the attainment of an anticipated goal. (Brown, 1969:347) Organizational identification is defined by Hall and his colleagues as a "congruence of individual and organizational values", (Hall et. al., 1970:176-177) by Cheney, "organization (as social actor) and individual's active process relations". According to Cheney, organizational identification occurs "when in a making decision, the person in one or more of his organizational roles perceives that unit's values or interest as relevant in evaluating the alternatives of choice". (Cheney, 1983:342). Cheney used the idea of an organizational identification scale, which measured an employee's feeling of attachment to an organization, his sense of belonging and pride in being a member of the organization, loyalty to the organization and support of its goals, and the perceived similarity between the employee and the organization in terms of shared values and goals. (Gautam et.al., 2004:302)

Since the advent of Social Identity and Self Categorization Theory, new theoretical arguments have been developed for the conceptualization of the organizational identification process. Mael and Ashforth, who were the first to consider Social Identity Theory assumptions, define organizational identification as the "perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregation". Based on their definition organizational identification occurs when one comes to integrate the values and beliefs of one's organization into his identity (Ashforth and Mael 1989:20-39; Mael and Ashforth, 1992:103-123). After Ashforth and Mael's study, which transferred the ideas of Social Identity Theory to organizational identification, other authors have followed, accepting



this new assumption, and have defined organizational identification within the framework of identity context.

### 5. Organizational Identification And Organizational Commitment Relationship

Social and organizational psychologists have been focusing on the psychological relationship between individuals and organizations. Individuals who experience psychological linkage with an organization have been shown to exhibit a host of job-relevant outcomes, such as job satisfaction, absenteeism and turnover (intentions), job motivation and extra-role performance. (Mathieu and Zajac 1990, Riketta 2005) As mentioned before, psychological attachment of employees to the organization is referred to as organizational commitment. However, Ashforth and Mael's studies based on social identity theory have yielded a new perspective on employee behavior studies that researchers offer an organizational identification concept to describe employees' emotional attachment to an organization. A particular problem in the field today is the confusion of organizational commitment, which is a concept in organizational psychology, with organizational identification, which is a concept in social psychology. Some practitioners and theorists use the terms organizational identification and organizational commitment interchangeably word, whereas others view them as two distinct concepts.

The research published in the 1970s and 1980s took into consideration assumptions of commitment from a psychological perspective and organizational identification earliest definitions which was indicate emotional bond of employees toward working organization. That researcher used organizational identification and commitment concepts as a synonyms or reciprocal verb (Rotondi, 1975:892; Hall et.al., 1970:176-177; Lee, 1969:330; Lee, 1971: 225). From a psychological perspective, organizational commitment is a positive attitude towards an organization which involves the "relative

strength of an individual's identification with involvement in particular organization." (Porter et. al 1979) There are three assumptions about committed employees: They accept organizational goals and values; they are willing to work hard for the organization; and they have a strong desire to remain in the organization. (Morrow, 1993:86) From this point of view, organizational identification is loyalty to an organization which enhanced internalized organizational values and goals (Asforth and Mael 1989:20-39) that maintained through group involvement (Rotondi, 1975:892), congruence of individual and organizational values, (Hall et. al., 1970:176-177), and goal-oriented commitment (Lee, 1969:330). It is remarkable that there are conceptual similarities between concepts based on "acceptance/adaptation of organizational goals and values" that cause a theoretical overlap of these two concepts. Thus, researchers use these concepts as different representations of interchangeable terms. (Lee, 1969:330, Lee, 1971: 225, Hall et.al., 1970:176-177)

Some authors see identification as an integral part of organizational commitment or define their relations as nested concepts. Buchanan (1974) defines identification as one of the three components of organizational commitment along with loyalty and job involvement. (Buchanan, 1974:535) As mentioned before, O'Reilly et al (1986) also used identification as one of the psychological bases of organizational commitment. (O'reilly and Chatman, 1986:492-493, Caldwell et. al., 1990: 247) Also conceptualization of affective commitment as "the employees' emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization (Feris and Aranya, 1983:87; Meyer et.al., 1991:62-67) are covered by identification concept as sub-components of the affective commitment process. Thus, affective commitment and identification are seen as a nested construct.

However, recent studies have put forth the idea that organizational identification and commitment are related, but have distinct

features. In related literature, several examples of research which is neither theoretical nor empirical have investigated and challenged this new approach for clarifying differentiation. Against the first group studies assumption, which were assumed conceptual overlap between the concepts, recent analysis has provided empirical and theoretical evidence that there is a conceptual difference between organizational identification and affective or attitudinal commitment. According to research, identification means more than definitional component of commitment such as Mowday's "relative strength of an individual identification with and involvement in an organization" or Meyers and his colleagues' "emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in an organization". (Van Dick and Wagner, 2002:133)

Besides the similar interpretation of concepts, studies based on social identity theory, have been defined the conceptual differences of concepts. Some authors defined concepts differentiations by using theoretical assumptions. Those studies generally grounded this differentiation to degrees of attachment and this attachment impacts on individual's psychology and behavior. On the other hand some of the researchers used empirical findings for defining concepts relationships.

According to theoretical arguments, organizational identification is the one of the forms of an individual's attachment to an organization (Bamber and Iyer, 2002) As a specific form of social identification, it refers to seeing oneself as a part of an organization, conceptualizing oneself in terms of membership in this organization. Organizational identification is a sense of "oneness" with or "belongingness to" the organization (Mael and Ashforth, 1995:312). The self-definitional aspect of social identification with organization, distinguishes it from organizational commitment and from prior conceptualization of organizational identification as a part of commitment. Organizational identification provides a partial

answer to the question "Who am I with relation to my organization?" on the other hand organizational commitment was "How happy or satisfies am I with this organization?" (Mael and Ashforth, 1995: 312). Organizational identification is the process of incorporating the perception of oneself as a member of a particular organization into one's general self-definition. (Dutton et. al., 1994: 239-263) In this framework, organizational identification occurs when an individual cognitively adapts organizational values and goals to his identity and uses organizational features to describe himself. (Pratt, 1998: 173) Thus organizational identification is a self-reflecting definition that association with organization where commitment involves binding individuals to a course of action or to the goals of organization. Identification relates with social actors such as other individuals, groups where commitment relates social or non- social forces, such as occupations, job, work etc. Identification is evaluative, cognitive awareness and emotional reaction to membership, whereas commitment reasons for maintaining relationships (Meyer et.al, 2006:667-676; Ricketta, 2005: 361; Herrbach, 2006:633) Thus organizational identification is a cognitive process where commitment pronounces itself as behavior (Mael, 1988:16-21).

Organizational commitment has focused mainly on attitudes which develop because of exchange-based factors. Employees commit to an organization to generate earnings that are provided by organizations or membership opportunities compared with other organizations. (Becker 1960: 32-40; Mael and Ashforth 1992:105; Pratt, 1998:175-178) However, identification reflects the extent to which the group membership incorporates the self-concept (Van Dick and Wagner, 2002:133) In other words; identification is a reconstruction of an employee's self-concept according to organizational features. It results in an individual's defining himself in terms of his membership in a specific organization. (Haslam et. al., 2003: 363; Pratt, 1998:177-178) Organizational identification is a relatively enduring state that reflects an

individual's willingness to define him- or herself as a member of a particular organization (Haslam, 2001) and the process whereby an individual's beliefs about an organization become self-referential or self-defining" (Pratt, 1998: 175) The degree to which members identify with their organizations depends on the attractiveness of the perceived organizational identity, the consistency between individual self-concepts and organizational identity. Organizational identification is seen as contingent upon the basis of sharing the fate or perceived similarities of identity features of organizations, whereas commitment is not. (Van Dick and Wagner, 2002: 133-134). Identification reflects the psychological merging of self and organization.

Thus, organizational identification represents a more powerful attachment than commitment. Individuals could commit to their organizations. This does not necessarily entail sharing the fate of the organization, this because of perceived organizations as an instrument to reach desired outcomes such as career development or individual earnings. Thus, if committed employees see other career alternatives or offers from outside the organization, they can easily transfer their commitment to another organization without making any sacrifices. On the other hand, if an employee identifies himself with an organization, he would necessarily have some psychological loss upon leaving the organization. Thus, organizational commitment is a ligament that can be transferred other organizations, whereas identification is genuine just for the developed organization and can not be transferred to the other entity. (Ashforth and Kreiner and Ashforth stated that "it is this implication of the self-concept and perceptions of oneness that distinguishes identification from related constructs like person-organization fit and organizational commitment: one identifies with a specific organization (and would feel a deep existential loss if forced to part) whereas one may discern good fit with a set of similar organizations and could come to feel committed to any of them" (Kreiner and

Ashforth, 2004:2).

While reviewing related literature some of the researchers who were define concepts relationship based on empirical findings, used correlations, or interpretation of concepts with other work variables. According to these researches antecedents of affective commitment as a more attitudinal construct that make a job enjoyable and involving and may thus contribute to a positive attitude toward the organization and quality of exchange relation such as leader, role and group features, task variety, autonomy, participation, compensation, organizational and job experiment role ambiguity, interaction with managers, peers (Shepiro et.al, 2002; Dessler, 1993; Meyer and Allen 1993; Steers 1977; Hrebiniak and Alluto 1972; O'reilly and Caldwell 1981; Meyer and Allen 1988; Meyer et.al.,1984; Becker and Billings, 1993; Hunt ve Morgan 1994; Schwepker 2001) On the other hand organizational identification antecedents are contingent factors are based on perceived similarity and shared fate with organization (Van Knippenberg, Sleebos 2006;573) Where attractiveness and similarities of organizational identity, organizational prestige, organizational size, severity of interaction with organization and with in organization, adequacy of organizational information, internal communication and visibility of membership, competition between groups and inside groups were assumed main antecedent of identification process (Mael and Ashforth 1992;1994; Bhattacharya et al 1995; Ellemers et. al 1999; Bergami and Bagozzi 2000; Smitdts et.al 2001; Dukerich et.al. 2002; Liponnen et al. 2005; Carmeli et al.2006; Freund 2006; Van knippenberg and Van Schie 2000; Fuller 2006a, 2006b; Van Dick et. al 2005; Bartels et. al 2007; Mignonac et.al., 2006). Hence identification could develop without interpersonal relationships or interaction; thus, identification does not require membership to an organization or special behavior and emotion (Meal and Ashforth, 1995: 313, Riketta, 2005:361-362). Hence Human resource policies fostering commitment are not necessarily increasing identification. In this

framework for identification behavioral implications are less conscious which means that consequences less relevant to overall group functioning (retention, job performance) where more relevant in commitment. (Meyer et. al. 2006: 667) Thus managers can foster identification by implementing programs that strengthen feelings of corporate identity and that create a positive image of the organization as a whole. In social identity approach one can imagine an employee who is working alone and far away from his or her organization but who is still highly identified with his her organization (Gautam et.al., 2004:305). By contrast, commitment occurs after interaction with other members of organization and socialization process. (Chatman 1991:460) in general

Consequences or effects of concepts on individual's behavior have been also discussing by authors for illustrate concepts differentiation. Employees who strongly identify with the organization are likely to focus on tasks that benefit the whole organization rather than purely self-interested objectives. Several authors argue that as the organizational identification increases, employees not only perform tasks that contribute to the well being of the organization but also demonstrate increased cooperation with other organizational members. ( Festinger, 1957, Mael and Ashforth, 1992:112-120, Van Knippenberg and Van Schie, 2000). Social Identity Theory and Social Categorization Theory suggest that in a context in which people recognize themselves and others as belonging to a shared (social) group, group members will seek to achieve positive self-esteem based on this higher-order categorization (Haslam, 2001; Turner et al., 1987; Turner et. al, 1994). So, when people's notion of who they are is defined more in terms of "we" instead of "I", the ingroup ("we") is wanted to be seen as different, and preferably better, than the outgroup ("they") (Haslam, 2001: 31).. So individuals who identify with his organization used "we" instead of "I" to define himself and used "they" for determine outside the organiza-

tion. Identification with organization fosters in-group favouritism and in-group cohesive. In-group bias and favouritism represents a striving for positively valued distinctiveness for one's own group and relevant out-group to achieve a positive social identity. (Turner et.al 1979:190) Hence individuals who identify themselves with organization would be showed more supporter behavior than other employees that not identify and more defensive behavior against the competitors, events, threats that possibly negatively effect position of organization. (Elsbach and Kramer 1996: 446; Carmeli and Freund 2002: 61; Dutton et. al 1994; Ellemers vd.1992; Freund 2006:81) where committed ones have not strongly support organizations as much as identified ones. Identified members with their organization will think and act on behalf of their group's norm and values even if they are not formally forced to do so by work contracts or control mechanisms because they have incorporated these group norms and values into their self-concept. Committed individuals, on the other hand are guided by formal aspects or work descriptions and supervisor's control. (Gautam et. al, 2004:305)

Organizational identification is also important precondition for general feelings of job satisfaction. Moreover, members that identify with an organization may be more likely to remain with the organization and to expend effort on behalf of the organization (Dutton et al., 1994, Van Knippenberg and Van Schie, 2000:142-143; Mael and Ashforth, 1995:329-330)..In their empirical analysis of faculty members of a university, Van Knippenberg and Sleebos found that affective commitment was uniquely related when controlling identification effect, to perceived organizational support, job satisfaction and turnover. By contrast, controlling affective commitment effect, organizational identification was uniquely aliened with the self-referential aspect of organizational membership. Thus, authors claimed that organizational identification and affective commitment are related, but distinct aspects based on their different correlation and im-

pacts on with special work outcomes. (Van Knippenberg and Sleebos 2006:572-578).

Besides different antecedents and consequences of organizational identification and commitments, concepts association with similar work concepts enhances confusion among researchers. Organizational identification relates positively with emotional well-being, (Mael and Ashforth, 1992:112-120), job satisfaction, job involvement, job motivation (Van Knippenberg and Van Schie, 2000), organizational citizenship behaviors (Dutton et al., 1994:256-260), intra-group cohesion, cooperation, altruism, positive evaluation, and loyalty to the organization (Mael and Ashforth, 1989:25), whereas organizational identification was also has positive correlation with other types of identification, such as occupational identification, work group identification (Van Dick and Wagner, 2002:142) and negatively with turnover intentions and turnover (Van Knippenberg and Van Schie, 2000:142-143; Mael and Ashforth, 1995:329-330). On the other hand, organizational commitment has also have similar positive correlates with organizational citizenship, work motivation, job involvement, job satisfaction, occupational commitment and negatively with to turnover and turnover intentions (Meyer and Allen, 1997:56; Meyer and Herscovitch., 2001; 300; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; 180-185; Reicher, 1985:468). Those unrelated researchs findings about correlations of identification and commitment to other work variables, have cause confusion or dilemmas about concepts differentiations.

Therefore Riketta's compressive meta-analysis provides clarification to organizational identification and commitment's correlations with similar work outcome that denoted concepts similarity. Rikatte compared organizational identification and commitment relations with other work behavior based on published and unpublished articles involving 96 independent samples. In his study, Riketta's divided organizational identification scales, such as Mael's and Chenney's Organizational identification scale, and organizational commitment scales, such as

Mowday's Organizational commitment (Mowday et.al., 1979) and affective commitment scale (Meyer and Allen 1990)) to illustrate the relationship between measures among work- outcomes. Based on this meta-analysis, Mael's scale has high correlation with affective commitment, whereas affective commitment overlaps with Chenney's scale. In addition authors found that the organizational identification scale seems to overlap less strongly with job satisfaction and more strongly with job involvement than AOC. These results hint at the substantive differences between the construct of organizational identification and affective commitment scales. Job involvement overlaps conceptually with instinct motivation; thus, organizational identification should be an important predictor of job involvement rather than commitment. A second important finding of this meta-analysis was that organizational identification correlates less strongly with job satisfaction ( $r=0.54 - 0.65, p < 0,05$ ) intention to stay ( $r = - 0,48 - 0.56, p < 0,10$ ) and absenteeism ( $r = -0,01$  vs.  $-0,15, p < 0,05$ ) and more strongly with extra-role behavior ( $r = 0,35$  vs.  $0,32, p < 0,05$ ) and job involvement ( $r = 0,61$  vs.  $0,53 p < 0,10$ ) than affective organizational commitment. (Riketta, 2005: 370-374). Similar results found by Cole, Brunch (2006), authors found that organizational identification, attitudinal commitment were differentiated with each other, where commitment was more negatively correlated with turnover than identification. (Cole and Bruch 2006: 597-598).

Gautam et.al studies which was measured organizational identification with Chenney's short version scale and attitudinal commitment with Morrow's scale, affective, continuous, normative commitment with Meyer's scale, findings of this research denoted that organizational identification is distinguishable from four types of commitment, whereas similar confirmatory factors results are found with others (Gautam et. al., 2004:310; Herrbach, 2006:636) Thus, based on these findings, the two concepts are differentiated from each other by confirmatory factor analysis and among the special work out-

come.

Ellemers and his colleagues' well-known research argue multidimensional conceptualization of identification that offers a new perspective on this conceptual debate. Ashforth, Meal and others mainly focus on the cognitive aspect of social identity in their theoretical analyses, and largely neglect the other components. Thus uni-dimensional analyses of identification cause conceptual overlap between affective commitment and organizational identification. However, Ellemers identified affective commitment as part of three components of social identification and viewed it as one's sense of emotional involvement with the group. Based on Tajfel's classical social identity theory, there were three components (cognitive, emotional and evaluative) of identification with organization or group. Cognitive component refers cognitive awareness of one's membership in social group (self-categorization), evaluative component is a positive or negative value connotation attached to this group membership which meant that perception of positive or negative assessment from outside (Group self-esteem). The final emotional component is a sense of emotional involvement with the group or individuals assignment of positive feelings with the group membership, which is also called affective commitment. (Ellemers et. al., 1999:372) According to Ellemers and his colleagues, these three aspects are related, but distinguished as separate factors and each of them plays a different role as mediators of group behavior based on their experimental study. (Ellemers et. al, 1999:385) In addition, some authors added a fourth component to multidimensional approach based on ethnic research as cognitive (behavioral) which describes participation in group-related activities. (Vandick, 2001:270) Bergami and Bagozzi tested their three-dimensional model with organizational prestige, stereotypes and citizenship behavior variable on the sample of food service employees. Research used Mael's organizational identification scale and self-image overlap questionnaire to measure cognitive identifi-

cation, and affective commitment scale, which was divided into two parts as joy(happiness arising from organization) and love (emotional attraction or affection towards the organization)dimension and used organizational-based self esteem scale for evaluative component for organizational identification. The confirmatory factor analysis showed that the four factor model (cognitive, affective (joy), affective (love) commitment and organizational-based self esteem) fit both full and part-time workers. Findings of causal path analysis denoted that organizational prestige and stereotypes directly affect cognitive identification which in turn influences affective commitment and organizational based self-esteem (evaluative component); affective commitment and self-esteem then determined citizenship behavior. While looking the reciprocal causation between identification components, researchers found that cognitive identification has influence on both affective and evaluative components but not vice-versa which means that employees who identify himself with organization, has a affective feelings about his organization and show citizenship behavior. These findings also point out that organizational identification (cognitive) fosters affective commitment (emotional) that concepts are concurrent at the same time (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000:570) which finding also corrected by Carmeli et. al (2006), Herrbach 2006:638 Haslam et.al., 2006:621; Ricketta, 2005: 370-374; Gautam et. al., 2004:310; Van Knippenberg and Sleebos: 2006:572-578; Mael and Tetrick, 1992: 819; Carmelli et. al., 2006: 102; Lipponen et. al., 2005:99) These findings manifest that organizational commitment and identification are related to either conceptual or empirical, but are distinguished from each other.

Except foreign examples, Turkish researchers have not adequately interested concepts differentiation or their interactions. While reviewing related Turkish literature, it is seen that lots of Turkish researchers deal with organizational commitment (Wasti and Can 2008;Yozgat and Şişman 2007;Şimşek and Aslan 2007; Sıgır 2007; Arbak and

Kesken 2005; Özmen et. al 2005) where very few of them deal with organizational identification. (İşcan, 2006; Tüzün and Çağlar ; Kıtapçı et. al 2005). However these researches are unrelated to each other or did not take into consider the concepts closed align. In this theoretical framework, very few researches (actually two studies which I can reach) that found analyzing conceptual relation of identification and commitment on Turkish context as a collectivist culture. One of these research focused on analyzing Mael's and Ashforth's organizational identification scales reliability and validity. (Mael, Ashforth, 1992) CFA analysis showed that the scale was reliable ( $\alpha = .87$ ) on Turkish context which was presented that organizational identification and affective commitment differentiate from each other. And other research dwells upon to investigate employees perceived external prestige perception influence on organizational commitment and identification denote that there was a significant and causal effect found between job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational identification where organizational commitment measured by Porter, Steer and Mowday organizational commitment scale (1974) (Tak and Aydemir, 2004:60-61; Tak and Aydemir, 2006: 215-216). These two research findings have not enough to display concept differentiation on the other hand they were unique studies for further research for consider concepts relationship among Turkish employees.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this study is investigate conceptualization of organizational commitment and identification and their linkage. Organizational identification defined as "perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregation" Asforth and Mael 1989:20-39, Mael and Ashforth, 1992:103-123) and it occurs whether organizational members have linked their organizational membership to their self -concepts. On the other hand organizational commitment is individual attitudes toward an organization and has psychological structure that main-

taining employee's interaction with their organizations and help employees to take decision to remain in organization. (Meyer and Allen, 1991:67) Thus organizational commitment has directed individuals to some sort of action such as acceptance of organizational goals and values, willingness to invest effort in organizations and willingness to be a part or a member of organization. / Desired to remain in organization. (Mowday et. al., 1979:227; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001: 301). According to theoretical arguments, empirical distinctiveness referred that organizational identification was emerged of personal- self with organizational- self where as commitment was more an attitude that ties employees to their organization. However empirical evidence found that affective commitment and organizational identification are closed related concepts. Where Elemers explained this closed relation by three dimensional model of identification as emotional component called and measured as affective commitment which was associated by cognitive component (Mael's organizational identification scale). (Elemers et. al., 1999:372, Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000:570) Under umbrella of various empirical researches we could say that organizational commitment and identification are related but guided different concepts.

Empirical evidence showed that cognitive organizational identification has high correlation with work variables such as job satisfaction, job involvement, and extra-role behavior than organizational commitment. Individual who identify them self with organization, sharing fate of organization, could not easily transfer their bond to other organization, will think and act on behalf of their group's norm and values even if they are not formally forced to do so by work contracts or control mechanisms and identification foster group salient that oppose a rigorous resistance to the rivals external attack and intention to remain in organization. Thus for improving positive work behavior managers should emphasize identification process and measured employee's identification as well as their commitment where

identification defined as more fixed and strong bond between organization and individuals.

However limited number of empirical studies and high correlations between measures of concepts does not give enough clarification to prove distinguishes of two concepts yet to solve this conceptual and empirical debate. (Riketta, 2005:364, Lipponen et. al., 2005:99) Also this issue is the existing limitation of this study. So there have been several and extensive empirical and theoretical researches need to clarify relations of these issues. Despite the limitation of empirical findings or perpetuity of conceptual differential debate, it was cleared that two concept could not use as interchangeable or reciprocal word.

The present study points several promising areas for future research. For example as its mentioned before concept of commitment and identification are enlighten different employee behavior and attitude thus they must be measured with different scales and concepts have different influences on various work variables(job satisfaction, turnover intentions). So authors and HR practionaires must be care while using these concepts in their theoretical or empirical explanations. Other important point for future researchers is to take into consider of cultural effects on these behavioral variables. Cultural values potentially have an impact on a range of micro and macro organizational phenomena. (Boyacigiller and Adler 1991:272) Turkey has collectivist cultural features (Hofstede 1980) where collectivism may be initial defined as a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as part of one or more collectives (family, co worker, tribe nation) are primary motivated by the norms of and duties imposed by those collectives; are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals. (Triandis, 1995:2) Based on social identity assumptions and collectivist culture features, Turkish employees could have more affinity to identify them self with other entity such as their organization than individualistic cultures.

Where empirical researches that focus on organizational identification and commitment relation on individualistic culture sample and do not care the cultural effect.

Scope of Wasti's argument, given the economic conditions and the uncertainty avoidance characteristic of the culture, Turkish employees were likely to form a need-based attachment with their company, (Wasti 1998:626) and disruption of personal relations constituted the most important impediment to quitting among Turkish employees. (Wasti 2003:548; Wasti, 2002:528-529) Findings implied that Turkish employee's attitudes and behavior toward organizations would be different maybe contrast than foreign peers. Thus in this framework cultural effects would be another context for analyzing commitment and identification relations. So following studies must take into consider of cultural effects on these variable.



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