THE EFFECT OF PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS ON WORKPLACE FRIENDSHIP: A STUDY ON HEALTHCARE EMPLOYEES*

Ph.D. Can BİÇER
Karabuk University, Safranbolu Vocational School, Turkey *(canbicer@karabuk.edu.tr)*

Asist. Prof. Ozan BÜYÜKYILMAZ
Karabuk University, Faculty of Business, Turkey *(ozanbuyukyilmaz@karabuk.edu.tr)*

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on how employees' perceptions of organizational politics affect the perception of workplace friendship. So, an applied research was carried out on 524 employees working at Karabuk University, Teaching and Research Hospital. Hypotheses generated were tested by path analysis under structural equation modeling. In sum, it has been determined that "general political behaviors" have a positive effect on workplace friendship and on the other hand "pay and promotion policies" have a negative effect on workplace friendship. Nevertheless, it has been found that there is no significant effect of the "go along to get ahead behavior" on workplace friendship.

Keywords: *Perceptions of Organizational Politics (POPs), Workplace Friendship, Healthcare Employees.*

ÖRGÜTSEL POLİTİKA ALGISININ İŞ YERİ ARKADAŞLIĞI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: SAĞLIK ÇALIŞANLARI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada çalışanların örgütsel politika algılarının işyeri arkadaşlıklarını nasıl etkilediğine odaklanılmıştır. Bu bağlamda Karabük Üniversitesi, Eğitim ve Araştırma hastanesinde çalışan personelin 524'ünü kapsayan uygulamalı bir araştırma yapılmıştır. Oluşturulan hipotezler yapısal eşitlik modellemesi kapsamında yol analiziyle ele alınmıştır. Sonuç olarak, "genel politik davranışların" işyeri arkadaşlıkları üzerinde olumlu bir etkisinin olduğu, öte yandan "ücret ve terfi politikalarının" işyeri arkadaşlıkları üzerinde olumsuz bir etkisi olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, "yükselmek için gerekeni yapma" davranışının işyeri arkadaşlıkları üzerinde anlamlı hiç bir etkisinin bulunmadığı bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Örgütsel Politika Algısı, İşyeri Arkadaşlığı, Sağlık Çalışanları.*

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1. Introduction

Politics in organizations is one of the most important aspects in organizational environment. Once the organization forms, the signs of the politics begin to appear as well. Besides, one of the main reasons of the formation of the organizational policy is the behaviors that are performed for securing and enhancing the personal interests in the organizations (Ertekin & Ertekin, 2003:1).

Organizational politics covers the individuals' activities such as, getting the power and various sources to get the desired outcomes, enhancing their power and using it to influence others' attitudes. Employees struggle to get the power to get ahead or to be promoted for higher status in the organization and this leads to the formation of the organizational politics as well (Doğan et al., 2014:3). Employees' perception and interpretation of these politics in the organization vary and, especially the variations play a significant role when sharing the sources and getting ahead come to question. In addition, individuals don't consider what the reality is and they value their own perception of reality. Thus, the politics in the organization in real mustn't be evaluated but the individuals' consideration for the politics must be focused. It's clear that, the higher the perceptions of organizational politics (POPs) is in the eyes of an employee, the lower in that employee's eyes is the level of justice and equity. More specifically, the employees who have more power in the organization are in better condition when they want to meet their needs and to achieve what they want to compare to those who think to execute influence tactics less (Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2003: 766; Islam et al., 2013:83).

So to speak, organizational politics has widespread impacts on employee attitudes and behaviors. Organizational politics forces employees to change attitudes or hinder them to change attitudes when it's time to share the sources. The environment with higher levels of POPs isn't desired and has negative outcomes and they lead to higher levels of stress, turnover intentions, and lower worker satisfaction, and worker productivity (Bouckenooghe, 2012:575-578). Workplace friendship is a kind of intimate relation in which the employees share their values, commitments and interests each other. The higher levels of POPs have negative effects on workplace friendships as well (Gao & Wang, 2014:282; Song, 2006:47). In a work environment, the higher levels of organizational politics affect the employees' attitudes, organizational coherence and the relations between the individuals and leads to inter-personal conflicts, and stiff competitions. In short, organizational politics is self-serving political activities and behavior threatening the interests of others and the employee, who executes these activities, abstains from team work, reduces the interaction with colleagues, hides information from others and maligns others for prominence that these activities often result in in poor workplace friendships or even no workplace friendships at all. That is to say, it's meant that, the more the employee has POPs, the less workplace friendships he/she has (Yen et al., 2009:548-549).

Within this concept, this study focuses on how the POPs affects the workplace friendships. The goal of this study is to discover how the POPs affects the workplace friendships in a work environment. Within the context of this goal, an applied research was done on the staff at Karabuk University, Teaching and Research Hospital including, doctors, nurses, emergency medical technicians, directors and other allied health personnel.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Perception of Organizational Politics (POPs)

Organizational politics appear depending on informal behaviors that are not sanctioned by the organization but that are executed to enhance the goals of an employee (Gao & Wang, 2014:283). Within this scope, in general, the Perception of Organizational Politics (POPs) includes some kinds of behaviors which are performed strategically by employees to maximize self-interests by ignoring the organizations 'interests. POPs cover all the factors that are caused by the employees who think that the organization is too political and all the consequences that are caused by the POPs which is formed by the employees at all. In addition, POPs is defined as evaluating the political behaviors which are performed by the manager's and coworkers' subjectively in the work environment by the employee. Together with the manager and the coworkers, organizational activities that urge the political behaviors are considered by the employee subjectively and it leads to POPs (Ay, 2014:22).

The consideration of whether the political behaviors are harmful to the organization and to the employee or not may vary depending on how the behavior is perceived rather than the reality of the behavior itself. In an organization, political activities are sometimes obvious and objective but they are sometimes unseen and are performed emblematically. So the perception of the behaviors varies according to the individuals, cases and time and it has the feature of subjectivity (Eryılmaz, 2014:25). POPs is mainly the things in the eyes of an employee that he/she witnesses in the work environment; however, POPs is the subjective exposition of the organizational activities that lead to organizational politics and the work environment consisting of the managers and the employees who execute the political behaviors. Hence, the perception of the employees is variable, because while some of the individuals think that the situation is good, some other might thing that it's bad. This is because employees don't consider the behaviors they display or they think their behaviors aren't meant in that way (Erol, 2014:47).

The results of the POPs fall into three main categories as psychological, attitudinal and behavioral. Organizational politics provides benefits like, getting ahead, recognition, getting the things done and appreciation-promoting ideas (Landells & Albrecht, 2017:43). In contrast, most of prior studies have shown that POPs may reduce, job satisfaction, and commitment, while increasing employee turnover (Bıyık et. al., 2016:102).The POPs is focused in three sub-dimensions in general. These are, general political behaviors, go along to get along and promotion and promotion and pay policies.

General Political Behaviors: General political behaviors are the influence acts of the employees for personal interests or the interests of the group that they represent. Such behaviors are the activities in whole to get the power in defining and assigning the individuals, groups, the methods and the processes to get the edges over decision making processes in an organization. In addition, behaviors such as blaming others, defaming, hiding information, pursuing personal interests at the expense of others, impression management, self-promotion, ingratiation, making friendship with the executives for personal interests, influence attempts, backstabbing, creating and maintaining a positive image and creating pressure on coworkers are the examples of general political behaviors in an organization (Başar & Varoğlu, 2016: 753).

Go Along to Get Along: Go along to get along refers to the silent acts of the employees. It's such a dimension that the employees form behavior patterns through their silent activities. Some employees don't like to discuss with the individuals who execute organizational politics actively and they only direct themselves to their own benefits. These employees fulfill their wishes via remaining silent and passive acts that are completely political action on their own (Eryılmaz, 2014:26-27). This kind of dimension refers to the acts that the employees perform by remaining silent and the employees secure their interests in this manner. That's a rational and profitable way to gain advantage in political environments because through passive and silent way, they can easily maximize their personal interests (Ayhan, 2013:12). Employees who want to get promoted, wage rise and play more active role in the organization, may act in order to influence their managers at their will. Moreover, pleasing the eye of the manager, acting friendly, praising and talking about the rules and making explanations to influence the managers and get their wishes done are the examples for these kinds of behaviors in the environment (Arıkan, 2011:67-68).

Pay and Promotion Policies: Organizations may create an environment that encourages and reward the political behaviors (Behram, 2015:43-44). This dimension argue that the managers sometimes tend to back their eminent employees during the performance assessment and they give higher scores to these employees so that they can get higher pay and better position, consequently they will act the way the manager like and these reflect on the political behaviors of the individuals in the organization (Ayhan, 2013:13).

2.2. Workplace Friendship

Workplace friendship is an interpersonal relationship among two or more individuals having an intimacy each other and it involves mutual goals and shared values. Workplace friendship indicates a psychological relationship or a psychological affinity among the coworkers. Workplace friendship flourishes by mutual trust, loyalty, commitment and sharing information among individuals at work (Huang, 2016:569).

Informal social relationships among coworkers are significant parts of organizational structure. Such informal relationships are beyond the formal structure of the organization and develop from very close friendships to random, spontaneous friendship. However, these friendships have got a vital role in getting the jobs done and organizational performance (Bhardwaj et al., 2016:527). According to the cognitive theory, the higher levels of workplace friendships exist in the organization, the higher levels the individuals provide support each other and share information among them.

There are some factors that affect the workplace friendship. These personal factors are, gender, personality and similarity. However, job sharing, organizational culture, the number of the levels in organizational chart and compliance may be claimed as the organizational factors (Özyer et al., 2015:264).

Workplace friendships make work more pleasurable and develop individual creativity. From the organizational point of view, since workplace friendships largely depend on the similar point of interest, mutual values, trust and loyalty; they raise the organizational commitment and the morale of the employees and reduce the employees' intention to leave (Sias & Cahill,

1998:274; Gordon & Hartman, 2009:116). Moreover, workplace friendships may improve the communication, trust, respect, cooperation, advancement, motivation and the security in the work environment and reflect in the employees' attitudes and behaviors positively. In sum, workplace friendships develop in the workplace play an important role in informal structure of the organization because they are potentially so strong relations that they may increase or hinder the organizational efficiency. However, the formal structure of an organization can contribute to the development of friendships in the work environment by grouping of units and departments (Morrison, 2004:115). There two basic dimensions of workplace friendships: friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence.

2.2.1. Friendship Opportunity

Opportunities are the number of chances an individual must realize, communicate and work collectively with other employees in the organization. So, social principles maintain that more frequent interaction and close intimacy between employees lead to friendship or at least to the opportunity for friendship formation in the workplaces. Workplace friendship relations appear in the formal organization and are natural part of the employees' daily association with the formal organization (Riordan & Griffeth, 1995:142). Employees who have the chance for information and experience sharing, influencing the decision-making process and supporting each other that arouse out of having workplace friendships have a career advantage over those who do not. Employees who are isolated and excluded from workplace friendship networks might work harder to advance in their careers because receiving their shares on important organizational resources and sources of influence will be limited. Moreover, the disadvantages of being isolated from workplace friendships are more likely to be felt by many employees in the organization, so the managers may feel this situation as a negative aspect in the workplace (Rumens, 2011:445).

2.2.2. Friendship Prevalence

Friendship prevalence is a feeling that an employee has strong friendships that are characterized by confidence, trust, and a strong will to interact with other coworkers at work. Workplace friendships are especially prominent sources of support though not officially identified as part of the formal organizational structure, besides workplace friendships are common and depend on key differences like wage, age, hierarchy, sex in the organization. These are some of the differences that affect directly the prevalence of the friendship as well. When employees make friendships each other, the formation of the friendships are characterized by communication level and intimacy among them, more access level to information, support, and level of rewarding. The support that the employees provide each other is different from other forms of relationships because employees who have fewer friends at work have some difficulties when doing their jobs since they cannot receive enough help and learn from coworkers 'experiences so as they cannot receive help from the members of their family. In sum, workplace friendships highly depend on mutual help and advantage among coworkers and employees who have more workplace friendships can solve the problems more easily at work (Cranmer et al., 2016: 67; Methot et al., 2015: 312-342).

2.3. The Relationship between POPs and Workplace Friendship

The POPs has got a wide effect on the attitudes and behaviors of the employees. Organizational politics, which is defined as the negative aspect of the workplace environments, identified as the activities that lead to negative feelings, illegality, self-interest acts and the actions which cause detrimental results in the organization and to the employees as well (Bouckenooghe, 2012:576; Landells & Albrecht, 2017:41).

According to the social exchange theory, employees can get valuable outputs through building relationships each other or interest exchange (Gouldner, 1960:162; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Consequently, it can be argued that organizational politics is the result of the scarce sources in the organization. Via the POPs, employees adapt to the situation when they get more sources or to reduce the uncertainties by collective interaction. That kind of interaction often begins through the reciprocal or voluntary relations to get and enhance the sources and diminish the uncertainness in the work environment. Barley & Kunda (2001) maintained that the presence of the organizational politics is an important element that affects the workplace friendships and individuals can get and share information and support via the organizational politics.

Moreover, when the POPs is high in level, the employees regard the conditions of the workplace more uncertain and variable. Thus, employees do not exactly know what actions would be accepted, rewarded or punished (Harris et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2008). Then they begin to pull away from those around them and reduce sharing. So, it can be inferred that the perception of increased organizational political behaviors in the workplace may lead to negative effects upon the workplace friendships. On the basis of these arguments, we predicted the following:

Hypothesis 1 (H_1): POPs would be negatively related to workplace friendships.

H_{1a}: General political behaviors would be negatively related to friendship opportunity.

H_{1b}: General political behaviors would be negatively related to friendship prevalence.

H_{1c}: The behavior of going along to get along would be negatively related to friendship opportunity.

H_{1d}: The behavior of going along to get along would be negatively related to friendship prevalence.

H_{1e}: Pay and Promotion Policies would be negatively related to friendship opportunity.

H_{1f}: Pay and Promotion Policies would be negatively related to friendship prevalence.

The hypothesis of the study that has been predicted due to the hypotheses above is shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Model of the Study
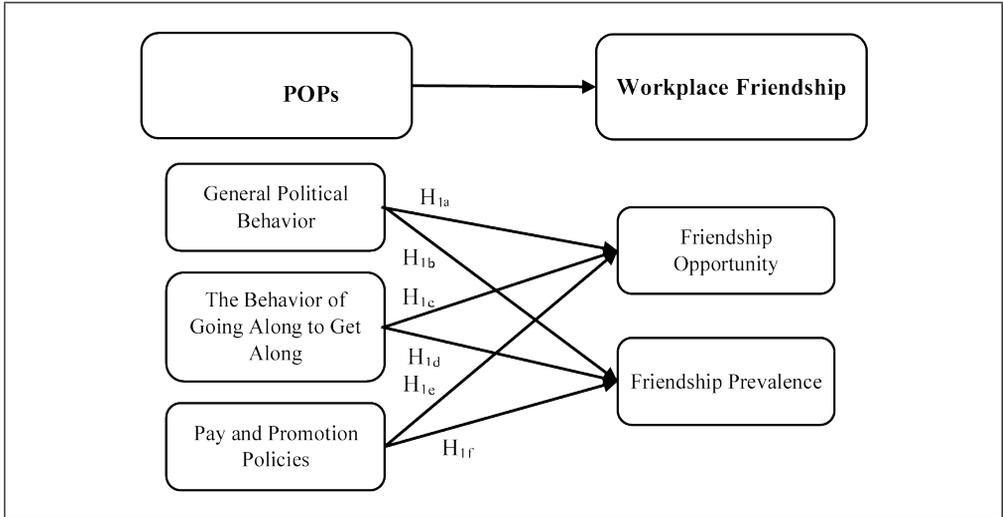
Source: The figure has been generated by the authors.

3. Method

3.1. The Purpose and Originality/Value of the Study

This study is focused on the friendships in work life. In this study, workplace friendships that the employees develop and maintain are analyzed within the scope of the perceptions of organizational politics. The purpose of the study is to determine how the perceptions of organizational politics the employees have affect the workplace friendships. This study is considered to be important because workplace friendships haven't been studied enough in Turkish literature and would be helpful for those who want to do research about this topic. In addition, we contribute an understanding of organizational politics and management of POPs in the organizations. In sum, since very few studies about workplace friendships were done, it's thought that, this study will contribute much to the further studies.

3.2. Setting and Respondents

The population of this study is full-time employees at Karabuk University, Teaching and Research Hospital. A total of 524 employees were from different levels and departments such as doctors, nurses, technicians, nursing staff, laboratory technicians, civil servants, secretaries, security staff and cleaning staff. When the study was carried out, the total number of the staff at Karabuk University, Teaching and Research Hospital was 1060 due to the information obtained from the personnel directorate of the hospital.

Within the %95 reliability limits of the universe, considering the %5 margin of error, the lowest sample unit size was calculated as 285 people (Sekaran, 2003:294; Altunışık et al., 2005:127). Within this scope, of the 750 questionnaires were distributed, 530 completed and

after examining the questionnaires returned, 6 of them thrown out. Considering the conversion rate, a face to face questionnaire conducted to 530 employees who were chosen randomly within the population. After examining questionnaires that were distributed 6 out of 530 were considered as null and void, so they were excluded from the analysis. As a result, 524 usable questionnaires have been regarded as valid for the study and analysis.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, the survey method has been employed in order to unveil the POPs and the prevalence of workplace friendships. Within this framework, after getting permission from the hospital where the research has been done, it's thought that the face to face survey method would be more efficient and feasible for the study.

Divided into three sections, the questionnaire form includes three sections. The first section probes the prevalence of POPs, the second section probes the prevalence of workplace friendships, and the third section gathers demographic data. First, validity and reliability analyses for the scales used have been conducted relevant to the study. The validity of the scales used, has been defined by confirmatory factor analysis and the reliability of the scales has been defined by Cronbach's alpha statistics. In order to analyze the hypotheses that have been generated, path analysis has been used within the concept of structural equation modeling.

3.4. The Scales Used in the Study

In this study, the effect of the POPs on workplace friendship has been researched. In this context, a measurement has been conducted associated with the concepts of POPs and workplace friendship. A literature review has been carried out to measure these concepts and the best fit scales for the study have been used.

The scale developed by Kacmar & Ferris (1997) has been employed in order to measure the degree of POPs of the employees' who work at Karabuk University, Teaching and Research Hospital. The scale of the POPs consists of three dimensions and 15 items. Within this scope, the scale includes 2 items probe the degree of the perception to the general political behaviors in the organization, 7 items probe the degree of the perception of the political behaviors of going along to get along and 6 items probe the degree of the perception of the pay and promotion policies that are applied in the organizations. The scale includes 4 negative statements and has been used as reverse coded in the analyses.

The scale developed by Nielsen et al. (2000) has been used to determine the degree of perception of the employees who work at Karabuk University, Teaching and Research Hospital to the workplace friendship. The scale of the workplace friendship consists of 2 dimensions and 12 items. 6 items in the scale probe the friendship opportunity and 6 items probe the perception of the friendship prevalence. 1 item in the scale is a negative statement and has been reverse coded.

4. Preliminary Analyses

4.1. Analyses of Demographic Information

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the employees who work at Karabuk University, Teaching and Research Hospital.

Table 1: Table Showing the Descriptive Statistics of Demographics

Variable	Category	N	%
Sex	Female	232	44.3
	Male	292	55.7
Marital Status	Married	303	57.8
	Single	221	42.2
Age	25 and under	42	8.0
	26-30	181	34.6
	31-35	125	23.9
	36-40	115	21.9
	41 and over	61	11.6
Education	High School or Below	90	17.2
	College Degree	227	43.3
	Under- Graduate Degree	157	30.0
	Post Graduate	50	9.5
Tenure	Less than 1 year	25	4.8
	1-3 years	149	28.4
	4-6 years	179	34.1
	7-9 years	92	17.6
	10 years or over	79	15.1
Position	Doctor	96	18.3
	Nurse	93	17.7
	Technicians	102	19.5
	Nursing staff, Laboratory Technicians	30	5.7
	Civil servants, Secretaries	112	21.4
	Security and Cleaning staff	91	17.4
Total		**524**	**100**

Table 1 displays that there are 292 (44.3%) female respondents and 292 (55.7%) male respondents. It also shows that 57.8% respondents are married and 42.2% respondents are single. So, it's obvious that the majority of the respondents are married. In addition, it shows

that 8.0% of the respondents are 25 years old and under, 34.6% of the respondents are between 26 and 30, 23.9% of the respondents are 31 and 35, 21.9% of the respondents are 36 and 40 and 11.6% of them are 41 years old and over. Additionally, the ages of the respondents in the study is with a mean age of 33 years. Of the total respondents, 17.2% has a high school or below degree, 43.3% has a college degree, 30.0% has an under-graduate degree and 9.5% has a graduate degree. For that matter, majority of the respondents have college and under-graduate degree .Of the total respondents, 9.5% has less than one year of organizational tenure, 28.4% has between 1 and 3 years of organizational tenure, 34.1% has between 4 and 6 years of organizational tenure, 17.6% has between 7 and 9 years of organizational tenure and 15.1% has 10 years or over organizational tenure. In this way, majority of the respondents has a tenure of between 1 and 6 years in the organization. Once again, of the total respondents, 18.3% are doctors, 17.7% are nurses, 19.5% technicians, 5.7% are nursing staff and laboratory technicians, 21.4% are civil servants and secretaries and 17.4% are security and cleaning staff at hospital.

4.2. The Analysis of the Structural Validity of the Samples

All the samples used in the study have been adapted from the previous studies. Therefore, within the concept of the study, the structural validity of the samples has been tested through confirmatory factor analysis (Survey Model). The structural validity means that the items in the scale are highly associated with the structure that is desired to measure and the relations among the sample factors are theoretically suitable (Carmines & Zeller, 1979:23). Thus, two different confirmatory factor analyses have been conducted including separate POPs sample and workplace friendship scale.

In the light of the information above, the structural validity of the POPs' sample has been tested. The factor loads of the confirmatory factor analysis and POPs' scale have ranged from 0.570 to 0.848. In addition, in the sample, the lowest t-score determined as 12.190 and has been found as meaningful due to 0.01 materiality level. Therefore, the factor load of all the items in the scale is above 0.50 and has been found as significant (Brown, 2006:30).

Within the concept of confirmatory factor analysis, chi-square fit test ($\chi 2/sd$) validity has been examined with goodness-of-fit index (GFI), normed fit index (NFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA). For that matter, in order to ensure the model fit, the value of χ^2/sd should be lower than 5, the value of GFI should be higher than 0.85, the values of NFI, TLI and CFI should be higher than 0.90 and the value of RMSEA should be lower than 0.80 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004:81-84; Bryne, 2010:73-84; Kline, 2011:193-209; Meydan & Şeşen, 2011:31-37). In the analysis result, it has been confirmed that the values that have been calculated within the concept of all goodness-of-fit criteria have provided acceptance ($\chi 2/sd$=2.767, GFI=0.946, NFI=0.943, TLI=0.954, CFI=0.963, RMSEA=0.058). This obtained finding shows consistency with sample data of the scale of the POPs. Therefore, the structural validity of the POPs scale that consists of 3 factors and 15 items is valid for measuring POPs in this study. Then, the structural validity of the scale of workplace friendship has been tested by confirmatory factor analysis. As a result of the test, it has been found out that the factor loads of the workplace friendship has ranged from 0.678 to 0.851. Besides, the lowest t-score has been determined as

14.016 in the scale, and it has been considered as significant at 0.01 materiality level. Thus, the factor load of all the items is higher than the 0.50 and meaningful (Brown, 2006:30).

In addition, it has been confirmed that the values that have been calculated within the concept of all goodness-of-fit criteria have provided acceptance ($\chi2/sd=2.073$, GFI=0.965, NFI=0.971, TLI=0.981, CFI=0.985, RMSEA=0.045). In the light of this information, the scale of the workplace friendship used in this study shows consistency with the sample data. Accordingly, the structural validity of the workplace friendship scale that consists of 2 factors and 15 items is applicable.

4.3. The Analysis of Convergent-Divergent Validity of the Scales

The convergent-divergent validity of the variables used in the study has also been tested. The convergent-divergent validity is calculated whether the items used in the measuring model are really agents of the factors that they are related to or not (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The divergent validity is applied whether the structures used in the measuring model are examining the same thing or not. The convergent validity also shows the relational degree of the alternative variables that measure the same structure (Hair et al., 1998:612).

When calculating the validity of the convergent-divergent, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and the correlation among variables have been employed. Average variance extracted shows the total variance value of each potential variable through observed variables. Again, composite reliability is calculated like Cronbach's alpha value and unveils the internal reliability of the observed variables that have been loaded into the potential variable (Hair et al., 1998:612). Table 2 displays the values of composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) and the correlation among variables.

Table 2: Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted and Correlation Among Variables

	Variable	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5
1	General Political Behaviors	0.793	0.658	0.811[a]				
2	Go Along to Get Along	0.888	0.535	0.542[**]	0.732[a]			
3	Pay and Promotion Policies	0.871	0.534	0.530[**]	0.514[**]	0.731[a]		
4	Friendship Opportunity	0.881	0.553	-0.216[**]	-0.294[**]	-0.444[**]	0.744[a]	
5	Friendship Prevalence	0.914	0.641	-0.158[**]	-0.236[**]	-0.401[**]	0.679[**]	0.801[a]

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; N=524; CR= Composite Reliability, AVE= Average Variance Extracted

Note: Diagonal values (a) are the square root values of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

In order to elicit the composite reliability, each of the variable's calculated AVE value must be higher than 0.50 and each of the variable's calculated CR value must be higher than 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981:45-46; Hair et al., 1998:612). In Table 3, it's obvious that AVE values of all variables are higher than 0.50. In addition, the calculated CR values of each variable is higher than 0.70. This finding proves that composite reliability has been elicited for all the variables used in this study.

In order to elicit the divergent validity, the calculated square root value of AVE for each of the variable must be higher than the correlation value of the that variable among other variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981:45-46; Hair et al., 1998:612). As it's seen in Table 3, the calculated square root value of AVE for each of the variable is higher than the correlation value of the that variable among other variables. Therefore, the divergent validity has been elicited for all the variables.

4.4. The Reliability Analysis of the Scales

After the validity analyses, the reliability of the scales has been intended to determine. Reliability is associated with getting the same results after having repetitive attempts of an experiment, test or any measuring process (Carmines & Zeller, 1979:11). Through the process of identifying the reliability of the scales, the statistics of Cronbach's alpha has been employed regarding each scale and the sub-dimensions of the scales. The statistics of Cronbach's alpha is a widely-used method to define whether the items in the scale considering to extract a homogeneous structure form an integrity or not and has scores between 0 and 1 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994:264-265; Kline, 2011:69). As a whole, it's maintained that, 0.70 is accepted as the lowest value for the statistics of Cronbach's alpha (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994:265).

Table 3 shows the scores of Cronbach's alpha that have been calculated related to the scales used in the study.

Table 3: The Scores of the Reliability of the Scales

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach Alfa (α) Scores
POPs Scale	15	0.904
General Political Behaviors	2	0.791
Go Along to Get Along	7	0.890
Pay and Promotion Policies	6	0.874
Workplace Friendship Scale	12	0.921
Friendship Opportunity	6	0.877
Friendship Prevalence	6	0.913

As it's seen in Table 3, within the concept of the scale of POPs, for the dimension of general political behaviors, the calculated Cronbach's alpha is 0.791, for the dimension of going along to get along, the calculated Cronbach's alpha is 0.890, for the dimension of pay and promotion policies, the calculated Cronbach's alpha is 0.874. Moreover, for the scale of POPs, integrally calculated Cronbach's alpha is 0.904. Within the concept of workplace friendship scale, the calculated Cronbach's alpha of the dimension of friendship opportunity is 0.877 and the calculated Cronbach's alpha of the dimension of friendship prevalence is 0.913. On the whole, the calculated Cronbach's alpha of the workplace friendship is 0.921. In the light of the findings obtained, it has been found out that the Cronbach's alpha scores of the all scales and their sub-dimensions are higher than 0.70. Therefore, it has been revealed that the scales in this study are reliable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994:265).

4.5. The Results of the Hypothesis Tests

In this study, it has been researched that how the POPs affects the workplace friendship. The hypotheses that were tried to test have been examined through path analysis within the concept of structural equation modeling. Figure 2 displays the results of the path analysis:

Figure 2: The Results of the Hypothesis Tests
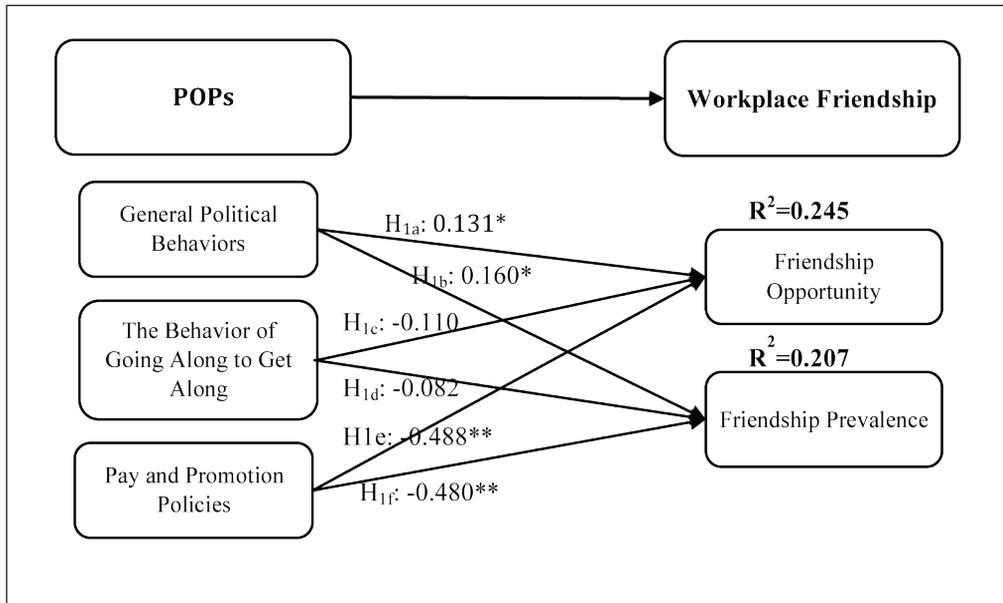
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; N=524
Source: The figure has been generated by the authors.

As a result of the path analysis, it has been determined that, all goodness-of-fit values have provided with acceptance (χ2/sd=2.595, GFI=0.899, NFI=0.902, TLI=0.929, CFI=0.937, RMSEA=0.055). Therefore, the relations in the model are consistent with the sample data.

The analyses dealing with the hypotheses that have been tried to test were conducted by the path analysis. The first hypothesis of the study examines the effects of the dimensions of the POPs on the workplace friendship. As a result of the analysis, it has been ascertained that the general political behaviors have got positive and significant effect on the friendship opportunity (H_{1a}: β=0.131, p<0.05). In addition, general political behaviors have predicted the friendship prevalence positively (H_{1b}: β=0.160, p<0.05). According to these findings, H_{1a} hypothesis, predicted as "General political behaviors would be negatively related to friendship opportunity" and H_{1b} hypothesis, predicted as "General political behaviors would be negatively related to friendship prevalence" have been rejected.

As a result of the analysis, the effect of the behavior of going along to get along on both friendship opportunity (H_{1c}: β=-0.110, p>0.05) and friendship prevalence (H_{1d}: β=-0.082, p>0.05) has been found out as insignificant. In accordance with the findings, H1c hypothesis,

predicted as "The behavior of going along to get along would be negatively related to friendship prevalence" and H_{1d} hypothesis, predicted as "The behavior of going along to get along would be negatively related to friendship prevalence" have been rejected. As a result of the analysis, it has been determined that the perception of the pay and promotion policies has negative and significant effect on the friendship opportunity (H_{1e}: β=-0.488, p<0.01). Similarly, the perception of the pay and promotion policies has negative and significant effect on the friendship prevalence (H_{1f}: β=-0.480, p<0.01). Thus, H_{1e} hypothesis, generated as "Pay and Promotion Policies would be negatively related to friendship opportunity" and H_{1f} hypothesis, generated as "Pay and Promotion Policies would be negatively related to friendship prevalence" have been accepted.

5. Conclusions

In this research, workplace friendships have been focused and the effect of the perceptions of organizational politics on the workplace friendships has been examined. Within this framework, the overall goal of this study was to determine the perceptions of organizational politics of the staff who work at Karabuk University, Teaching and Research Hospital on their workplace friendships. The data used in this study have been obtained from 524 employees working at hospital.

First, the study examines the effect of the dimension of the POPs, general political behaviors on the dimensions of workplace. As a result of the analyses, general political behaviors affect the friendship opportunity positively and significantly. However, general political behaviors predicted the friendship prevalence positively. In general, the previous studies maintain that when the employees' perception of the political behaviors raise in the organization, the friendship they develop would be affected negatively (Nielsen et al., 2000; Miller et al., 2008; Gordon & Hartman, 2009; Yen et al., 2009; Haq, 2011; Milam, 2012; Chang, 2013). However, the findings obtained in the study show that the results might be different because ambiguities in the organization might lead the employees act more general political behaviors and then that may lead the employees to develop friendship in the organization.

The second hypothesis in the study examined the effect of the POPs on going along to get along and the dimensions of the workplace friendships. As a result of the analysis, it has been found out that the behavior of going along to get along has an insignificant effect on the friendship opportunity and friendship prevalence.

The third hypothesis in the study examined the effect of the dimension of perception of the pay and promotion policies of the POPs on the dimensions of workplace friendships. As a result of the analysis, it has been determined that the perception associated with the pay and promotion policies has negative and significant effect on friendship opportunity. Similarly, the perception associated with the pay and promotion policies has negative and significant effect on friendship prevalence. In sum, these results correspond with the findings obtained in the previous studies (Riordan & Griffeth, 1995; Sias & Cahill, 1998; Nielsen et al., 2000).

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