

Mediator Effect of Perceived Organizational Support in the Relationship between Authentic Leadership and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

In this study, being inspired from the principles of positive psychology and its organizational projection, positive organizational behavior, we have focused on a significant positive organizational behavior concept, namely authentic leadership and its effects on organizational commitment. With the research model, it is aimed to understand whether organizational support perceptions of organizational members act as a mediator in the relationship between authentic leadership behaviors of the leader and organizational commitments of the followers. The field study related to the research model has been conducted in İstanbul on 255 white collar employees mostly working in service industry. Statistical analysis of the study is conducted with SPSS 20.0. Results of the study confirmed the fact that organizational support perceptions of followers have a mediating effect in the authentic leadership and organizational commitment relationship.

Key Words: Authentic leadership, Perceived organizational support, Organizational commitment, Positive organizational behavior

Otantik Liderlik ve Örgütsel Bağlılık Arasındaki İlişkide Algılanan Örgütsel Desteğin Aracı Etkisi

Abstract

Bu çalışmada, pozitif psikoloji ve örgüt alanındaki yansıması olan pozitif örgütsel davranıştan etkilenecek, pozitif örgütsel davranış yaklaşımının önemli kavramlarından biri olan otantik liderliğe ve bu liderlik tarzının örgütsel bağlılık üzerindeki etkisine odaklanılmıştır. Çalışmaya ait araştırma modelinde çalışanların örgütsel destek algılarının, otantik liderlik ile örgütsel bağlılık arasındaki ilişkide aracı etkisi yaratıp yaratmadığı araştırılmıştır. Çalışmaya ait saha araştırması İstanbul bölgesinde hizmet sektöründe çalışan 255 beyaz yakalı personel üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiş olup arařtırmaya ait analizler SPSS 20.0 programı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Analizler sonucunda, hipotezlerde öngörüldüğü gibi otantik liderlik davranışının çalışanların örgütsel bağlılıkları üzerinde pozitif etkisi olduğu ve bu ilişkide algılanan örgütsel desteğin aracı etkisi yarattığı görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Otantik liderlik, Algılanan örgütsel destek, Örgütsel bağlılık, Pozitif örgütsel davranış

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Introduction

Our starting point in this paper is positive organizational scholarship. It is a school of thought emphasizing that positive organizational phenomena have the ability to enhance well-being in organizational life. It can be distinguished from traditional organizational studies with its understanding regarding the best conditions of individuals (Cameron et al., 2003, p. 4). According to positive organizational scholars, when the congruent means are utilized and when the positive core of each organization and the individuals in these organizations are found, it is easy to develop and nourish organizational members and the organizations themselves (Avolio, & Gardner, 2005). And without doubt, positive leadership styles that are encouraged by positive organizational behavior scholars are proper in building positive work climates that nourishes both individuals and organizations. And authentic leadership style that is well known and most recommended positive leadership style deserves consideration.

On the one hand, recent corporate corruptions and economic crisis have given birth to the need for more transparent and ethical leaders that do not deny responsibility, behave transparently and decently with authenticity and internal integrity (Peus et al., 2012, p. 331). In fact, authentic leadership is the kind of leadership wherein ideas of followers regarding the leader's authenticity that are activated by moral judgements are legitimated by leaders moral and ethical behaviors and attitudes (Avolio et al., 2018, p. 4). In this context it refers to a broad psychological term explaining individuals' general inclinations to view themselves within their social atmosphere and to live their lives accordingly (Ilies et al., 2005, p. 376). Authentic leaders are the kind of individuals that prefer to show their true selves in their status as a leader (Leroy et al., 2015).

Authenticity in authentic leadership literature encompasses being true to leader's himself, and behaving in accordance with his internal values and standards in contrast to complying with others' demands. It includes alignment of the leader's internal values and norms with the empowerment of followers thus creates authentic leader-follower relationships (Swain, Cao, & Gardner, 2018, p. 122). Harter (2002) also described authenticity as owning one's own experiences, encompassing one's ideas, convictions, beliefs, desires, or emotions. In fact one can not be authentic by imitating others (George, 2003, p. 1). According to Authentic leadership theory the key to success is being original, clear, transparent and intimate. Behaving in compatible with one's true self can be in many different ways including telling the truth, admitting one's own, faults being aware one's own deficiencies or behaving in compatible with one's own personal values (Leroy et al., 2015).

Previous studies confirm that this unique leadership style is effective on performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Walumbwa et al., 2008), organizational identification (Leroy, Palanski, & Simons, 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2010), contributes to group performance (Walumbwa et al., 2011) and team authenticity (Hannah, Walumbwa, & Fry, 2011). And in this study, we tried to find whether authentic leadership is effective on organizational commitment in Turkish context. We also wanted to see whether perceived organizational support has a mediating effect in the relationship between authentic leadership behavior and organizational commitment behaviors of followers.

Authentic Leadership

Recent ethical crises and moral disappointments in relation to corporate leaders have resulted in the birth of a new approach, one of the most prominent positive leadership styles that is called authentic leadership (Avolio, & Gardner, 2005). This leadership behavior is seen in corporate organizations when the leader is honest with oneself, tends to be sincere with his followers and behaves in a manner that reflects his own norms and values (Walumbwa et al., 2008). They are the kind of leaders that tend to express their "true selves" which can be described as "being one's own person" (George, 2003, p. 12).

Luthans and Avolio (2003) explains authentic leadership as a leadership method involving both positive leader capacities and a highly progressed organizational context. According to extant literature, it is as a leadership methodology drawing upon and promoting both positive psychological capacities of followers and a generalized positive ethical work atmosphere that contribute to greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders thus, in turn contributing to positive self-development on the part of followers (Walumbwa et al. 2008, p. 94). And Jensen and Luthans (2006) claims that positive organizational behavior states the so

called psychological capacities namely, optimism, resiliency and hope, will positively contribute to authentic leadership development. According to Rego et. (2012), theoretically these four dimensions performs a self-regulatory inclination that is governed, through leader's internal ethical standards and evaluations of their own leadership behaviors.

Authentic leaders are known as the kind of leaders that possesses self-awareness and a personal norms, that reflects clarity about their values, attitudes and beliefs (Shamir, & Eilam, 2005, p. 396). According to authentic leadership theory both leaders and followers should possess this self knowledge and behave authentically and they may have different tendencies regarding the extent to which they let their true selves reflect to work (Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2009). They do not act as leaders just because they are in this role, nor because with the aim of building an image as a leader. In contrast, performing a leadership function and related activities are self-expressive attempts for them (Shamir, & Eilam, 2005, p. 396).

Without doubt, as Wong and Cummings (2009) claim, this leadership attitude helps to build trust and respect cultures that give way to healthier atmospheres. According to Walumbwa et al. (2008), these leaders build trust among their followers through; creating self-awareness, ensuring balanced processing of information, and creating internalised moral perspective and relational transparency at work. In this context balanced processing can be understood as gathering sufficient opinions and viewpoints from other people while making a decision. These leaders encourage openness with others, namely relational transparency which ensures opportunity for novel ideas and challenges. They also set high moral standards and they internalize these standards and they are good at scrutinizing their own selves and others' realities, that is to say they have self-awareness regarding their own strengths and weaknesses and their affects on others.

On the one hand, authentic leadership can be considered as a way of leading through which authentic leaders contribute to follower autonomous motivation. In this point, Shamir and Eilam's (2005) explains authentic leadership behavior as the kind of leadership style that rests on leaders' self-concepts and the links between leaders' self-concepts, attitudes and behaviors. According to them authentic leaders have high levels of person–role merger, clarity, self-congruence, and integrity. They define authentic leadership as a process including both the authentic leader's himself and also the authentic followers, since followers deliberately choose to follow their leader and they also become authentic leaders (Shamir and Eilam's, 2005, p. 398). Furthermore, Whitehead (2009) explained authentic leadership as a construct encompassing; high levels of awareness (2) trust building; and (3) commitment to organizational success.

Since authentic leaders are not ego-centric and obsessed with status, they are not threatened by their followers and they tend to empower them by allowing room for autonomy (Leroy et al., 2015, p. 1683). In fact, they foster followers' motivation in the workplace (Deci, & Ryan, 2000) through enacting their true selves at work. They appreciate their followers' work related positive outcomes thus, followers feel more motivated. And in return followers have more sustainable performance (Leroy et al., 2015, p. 1683). In fact, authentic followership is as important as authentic leadership behavior to the development of authentic leadership in a workplace (Gardner et al., 2011, p. 1141). Avolio and Reichard (2008) also tries to attract attention to the fact that followers play an important role in the formation of authentic relationships. Similarly, Gardner et al. (2005) claimed that a positive ethical climate would contribute to the development of authentic leaders and followers in a mutually reinforcing way, increasing authentic behaviors in the workplace and contributing to higher levels of commitment. On the one hand, According to Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009) authentic leadership can be conceived as a transparent and ethical type of leadership wherein openness, clarity and authenticity is encouraged and followers are encouraged to participate in decision making processes.

In the extant literature we can come across many empirical studies confirming effects of authentic leadership on positive organizational outputs. For example; in Leroy et al.'s (2015) study, positive effects of authentic leadership on need satisfaction and work performance has been confirmed. Moreover, in Hsieh and Wang's (2015) study, positive effects of authentic leadership on employee trust and work engagement has been shown. Similarly, Hirst, et al. (2016) proved the role of authentic leadership as an antecedent of helping behavior. And in Lyubovnikova et al.'s (2017) study, their results confirmed the assumptions in the research model and showed the mediator effect of team reflexivity.

Organizational Commitment

Commitment is a unique force binding the individual to a certain course of action (Meyer, & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 301). It influences individual behavior independent of other motives and attitudes. Moreover, it leads to persistence in a course of action even in the face of adversities and problems that creates disadvantageous situations for the individuals and make individuals behave in a positive manner even in situations that are not advantageous for their self-interest (Meyer, & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 301).

On the one hand, in organizational setting commitment is a psychological state binding individuals to the organization and making turnover less likely (Allen and Meyer, 1990, p. 14). And again according to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), it is one of the most frequently examined forms of psychological attachment. Becker (1960) applied the first studies on organizational commitment during 1960s. He suggested that commitment can explain different kinds of behaviours viewed by employees to be an investment in organizations and shape all their actions. Meyer et al. (2002) suggests that organizational commitment attracts the attention of many scholars due to its notable affects on several work outcomes for example performance, organization citizenship behavior, absenteeism and satisfaction, taking various forms in workplaces and influencing effectiveness of the organization and well-being of followes (Meyer, & Herscovitch, 2001, p. 299). That is why, organizational commitment also has the potential to contribute to lower turnover rates (Yousef, 2017, p. 79).

On the other hand, by triggering meaningful and positive relationships in organizations, authentic leaders let employees to share a deeper understanding with their leaders, thus aid creation of positive emotional states (Bandura, & Kavussanu, 2018, p. 969). They provide constructive feedback; they remain hopeful and confident, they are also succesful in influencing optimism and other positive emotions among their followers (Bandura, & Kavussanu, 2018, p. 969).

In general, leadership is considered as an important antecedent of organizational commitment. In the related literature, there are empirical studies confirminf the effects of leadership on Organizational commitment. For instance; in Top, akdere and Mercan's (2015) study, effect of transformational leadership on Organizational commitment has been confirmed. Similarly, in Demirtaş and Akdoğan's (2015) study organizational commitment has found to be triggered by ethical leadership. And in Lapointe and Vandenberghe's (2018) study servant leadership's positive effect on organizational commitment is credited.

Perceived Organizational Support

According to organizational support theory, perceived organizational support can be explained as the perception of employees about their expectations regarding favorable treatment received from the organization in regards to their positive attitudes and work outcomes (Kurtessis, Eisenberger, Ford, Buffardi, Stewart, & Adis, 2017, p. 1855). In workplaces access to organizational support means receiving positive feedback and guidance from leaders, colleagues and subordinates (Wong, & Laschinger, 2013). Foundation of perceived organizational support goes back to social exchange theory which states that there are negotiated trade offs between parties in an organization. And in the case of perceived organizational support the exchange is based on the quality of exchanges between employees and the organization (Harris, & Kacmar, 2018, p. 188).

In fact, Eisenberger et al., (1986) claims that perceived organizational is the tendency of employees to assign their organizations humanlike properties and attributes. The strength of perceived organizational support increases when employees identify their leaders with their organizations, as opposed to viewing their actions as idiosyncratic (Rhoades, & Eisenberger, 2002, p. 699). And this perceptions gives the employees a general idea about whether the organization appreciates their contributions and treat them favorably. Organizational support theory invokes social exchange theory wherein employees believe that there is a trade of between their effort and their loyalty for tangible benefits and rewards from the organization (Kurtessis et al., 2017, p. 1856). In order to understand organization's readiness to reward increased work effort and positive work outputs, employees build general ideas related to the extent to which their company appreciate their performance and contributions, and regarding the extent to which the organization cares about them. Thus, perceived organizational support is influenced by the quality, quantity, and sincerity of praise, approval and support of their organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 501).

Since employees view the perceived organizational support they get from their superiors as representative of the organization's overall attitude towards them, employees' perception of supervisor support mostly lead subordinates to build higher levels of perceived organizational support (Shanock, & Eisenberger, 2006, p. 690). In Eisenberger et al.'s (2002) longitudinal study investigating the relationship between employees' perception, it was seen that when supervisor value subordinates' contributions and care about their well-being, namely, employees' levels of perceived organizational support increases over time.

Related literature encompasses noteworthy studies on the relationship between perceived supervisor support, namely managerial support and perceived organizational support. For example; Eisenberger et al. (2002); Rhoades et al. (2001), Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe (2003) and Narcikara (2017) are among the kind of studies that confirmed availability of a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and perceived managerial support.

In fact, perceived organizational support is influenced by various organizational implications towards the employee that in turn influences employees' interpretation of organizational inclinations affecting these treatments. That is to say, there occurs a natural social contract between the employee and the organization in relation to the support that the employee get from the organization. These treatments can include organization's likely reactions to the employee's for their future problems, mistakes, and superior or inferior performance, and the organization's inclination to reward satisfactory performance and positive deviations at workplace. In case, when perceived organizational support meet the needs of employees for praise and approval, the employee would reciprocate this perception with a a positive emotional bond to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 501). In the extant literature although scarce in numbers there are some empirical studies confirming the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment. For example; in Aube et al.'s (2007) study the positive relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment has been confirmed.

Hypothesis and Research Model

Being inspired from the extant literature, in this study we wanted to explain whether authentic leadership has a positive effect in organizational commitments of Turkish employees and whether perceived organizational support acts as a mediator or not. With explaining these relationships, we aimed to understand the role of leaders' authentic behavior in explaining more committed individuals in organizational settings which may be an important information that direct leadership preferences in Turkish organizations.

Hypothesis

In authentic leadership the strength of emotions is contagious and affects the organizational climate, creating an authentic atmosphere (Grandey et al., 2012). Being the most important source of authenticity climate, authentic leadership prone to affect feelings trust and affective commitment on the side of followers. Being effected by the emotional contagion approach, it is meaningful to claim that employees' trust in their leader will positively affect their affective commitment to the organization (Xiong et al., 2016). In this context, emotional contagion can be considered as a process wherein some people can influence the emotions of others through the willing or unwilling induction of emotions (Schoenewolf, 1990, p. 50). Under authentic leadership a certain emotional induction is experienced through constant exposure to authenticity of the authentic leader.

In the authentic leadership and organizational commitment relationship, with the help of the positive social exchanges and emotional contagion the result is often follower identification with the leader. And besides that authentic leaders are often inclined to encourage their followers to identify with the core values of their collective organization (Bandura, & Kavussanu, 2018, p. 969). Authentic leaders have an open and nondefensive relationship with their followers that is why they can present themselves to others as vulnerable individuals. This presentation makes followers build trust in their leaders and gives birth to higher levels of willingness to be vulnerable as well (Walumbwa et al., 2011). This reciprocity between leaders and follower increases the probability of identification between followers and leaders (Leroy et al., 2012, p. 257). Authentic leaders show a comprehensive understanding of strengths and weaknesses of their followers. They have the capability to gain an insight into their self through exposure to their followers and through being cognizant of their own impact on others. Clarity in their expressions,

their high level understanding, and their willingness to be self-aware, helps to correct personal predispositions of followers and contribute to positive work outcomes. And these properties of authentic leaders potentially increase commitment in followers to their leaders and organizations (Bandura and Kavussanu, 2018, p. 969). Under authentic leadership, in time followers learn, understand, and value their leader's personality, attitudes, needs, and desires namely they build personal identification and they start to value the leader's role-position as a leader and they start to perceived them as a representative of the overall organization, namely they build social identification. And as a result, this social identification affects employee's commitment (Avolio et al., 2004). In Bandura and Kavussanu's (2018) study among athletes in sport industry has showed that authentic leadership is positively related to outcomes including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational trust etc. In an other study Kalay, Brender-Ilan, and Kantor (2018) found that authentic leadership has a negative relationship with role-conflicts and ambiguities, through the mediating effect of affective commitment. And they also found that authentic leadership is negatively correlated with intention to leave and affective commitment is a mediator in this relationship.

According to authentic leadership theory incase leaders are truly authentic and oblige to their own values and convictions, they can make others behave in the same ways they do and by this way they can contribute to a positive organizational climate and higher performance (Walumbwa et al., 2008). In this point, Regan et al., (2016) investigated the effects of authentic leadership on the empowerment perception of nurses, results showed that authentic leadership explains higher perceived structural empowerment. Similarly Gatling, Kang and Kim (2016) found evidence for the positive effect of authentic leadership on organizational citizenship in the hospitality industry, and showed that authentic leadership mediates reduced turnover intentions. And in another study, Choi and Ahn (2016) examined the mediating effect of employee empowerment in the model examining effects of authentic leadership of nurses' organizational commitment on their job satisfaction. Results confirmed statistically significant and positive relationship between dependent and independent variables and empowerment acts as a perfect mediator in the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment. Rego, Lopes, M. P. and Nascimento (2016) also investigated psychological capacities' mediating effect in the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment and their results confirmed the positive relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment and their results also indicated that this mediating effect is merely valid for three of the psychological capital dimensions, that are, self-efficacy, hope and optimism. In Wong, Heather K. S. Laschinger's (2013) study the link between authentic leadership and perceptions of empowerment, performance, and job satisfaction have been investigated, results of the study showed that Authentic leadership has a positive effect on perceptions of empowerment, that in turn increases job satisfaction and individual performance. Being inspired from the extant literature we hypothesized that authentic leadership will have a meaningful effect on followers' organizational commitment. Thus, our first hypothesis is:

H1: Authentic leadership has a statistically meaningful effect on followers' organizational commitment

Perceived organizational support invokes the norm of reciprocity, giving way to a felt obligation on the side of employees to help their organization. And results in higher levels of performance with the expectation that the organization will notice and reward it (Kurtessis et al., 2017, p. 1856). That is to say, employees demand balance in their relationship with their organization. Thus, their perceptions regarding organizational support result in higher levels of organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2001). In fact, the level of organizational support perceived among the employees may be different (Kerse, & Karacabey, 2017, p. 377) that is why we preferred to use adjective 'perceived' before the term organizational support.

Perceived organizational support and organizational commitment relationship can be conceptualized within a social exchange point of view. Since perceived organizational support is the supposition that employees have higher levels of perceived organizational support if they believe that their organization is willing to reward their satisfactory performance back. And they tend to willingly reciprocate these positive attitude with higher levels of commitment to their organization (Pannaccio, & Vandanbergh, 2009, p. 225).

As a consequences of perceived organizational support employees adopt a felt obligation to care about their organization's welfare and contribute to its success. Furthermore, the positive feelings such as approval, and respect that are perceived to be related with perceived organizational support fulfill

socioemotional needs of employees leading them to have higher commitment with their organizations (Rhoades, & Eisenberger, 2002, p. 699). Moreover, it increases employees' convictions about availability of performance-reward relationship in the organizations thus contributing to higher performance and commitment (Rhoades, & Eisenberger, 2002, p. 699). And individuals with a high commitment make extra efforts to achieve the goals of the organization (Gül, & Beyşenova, 2018).

In their study on perceived organizational support Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli, (2001) tried to see whether there is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment of followers. The study confirmed that favorable work conditions operate via perceived organizational support to increase organizational commitment, that, in turn, decreases employee withdrawal behavior. Pannaccio and Vandenberghe (2009) also investigated the relationship of organizational support and psychological wellbeing of employees using longitudinal data (N = 220), results of the study showed that there is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment and organizational commitment mediated the relationship between perceived organizational support and well-being. Similarly, Aube et al., (2007) examined perceived organizational support and organizational commitment relationship. Their results showed that perceived organizational support is significantly correlated with organizational commitment. In addition, locus of control and work autonomy have moderating effects with in relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment. Being inspired from the extant literature we supposed that perceived organizational support will have a statistically meaningful effect on organizational commitment and in the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment perceived organizational support may act as a mediator. So, our second and third hypothesis are:

H2: Perceived organizational support has a statistically meaningful effect on organizational commitment.

H3: Perceived organizational support acts as a mediator in the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment.

Research Model

As seen in Figure 1. in this study, the relationship among authentic leadership, perceived organizational support and organizational commitment has been tested. We wanted to see if there is a mediator role of perceived organizational support in the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment.

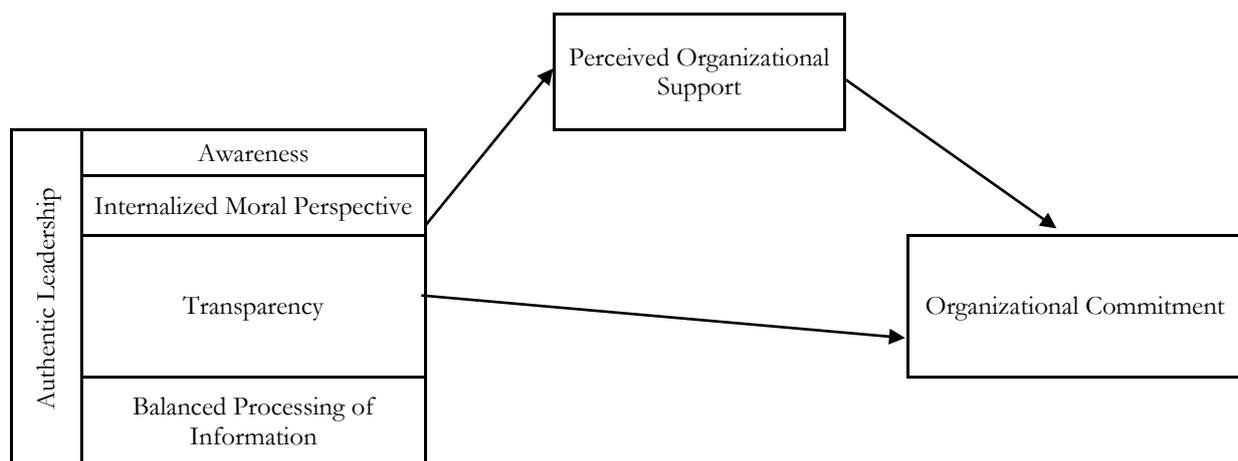


Figure 1. *Research Model*

Method

Sample, Method and Scales

In this study, the relationship among authentic leadership, perceived organizational support and Organizational commitment has been examined. This research has been carried out on 255 white collar personnel working in medium and large scale and service sector enterprises in Istanbul. The research was conducted on white-collar personnel because of their higher capacity to understand theoretical concepts, higher levels of education and their closeness to hierarchically upper positions and leaders. It has been

assumed that they will have wider knowledge about their corporate business culture, vision, policies and performance compared to blue-collar employees. 41% of the participants were from the service sector and from the banking and finance sector. 18% of the participants are white collar professionals in the fast-moving consumer goods sector, 15% are white collar professionals working in the telecommunications sector, which is another important actor in the service sector.

In this study, both face-to-face and online survey methods have been used with the aim of collecting data for the field study. The survey items of the study have been developed using scales borrowed from prior studies. And these items were designed as five-point Likert scales, with anchors ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Since some of the research items were negatively worded, they were transformed to a positive version. For measuring authentic leadership behaviours we use Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) Authentic Leadership Questionnaire with 16 questions and 4 main dimensions including transparency, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, self-awareness, perceived organizational support. Perceived organizational support has been measured by a 10 item scale created by Stassen ve Ursel (2009) and translated to Turkish by Turunç et al. (2010). And for organizational commitment items 5 questions borrowed from Fry's (2003) spiritual leadership scale. While collecting the data, the participants were asked to answer all questions. And data of the study have been analyzed by using SPSS 20.00.

Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was performed by using Principal Component Analysis and Promax Rotation method to investigate whether the observed variables were loaded to the predicted factor structure. Principal Components Analysis has been used as a preferred analysis technique in exploratory factor analysis and Promax rotation method has been preferred because it is recommended to use in cases where the relationship between variables is high (Hair et al., 2010). Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sample adequacy test and Bartlett sphericity test have also been applied in order to test the suitability of the data set for factor analysis. As a result of the analyzes, KMO value was found to be 0,967 and the desired level was above 0,50 and Bartlett's test was significant at the significance level of 0.001. In addition, the diagonal values in the anti-image correlation matrix were looked at and it was found that these values were above 0.5. Accordingly, it was found that the sample data were suitable for factor analysis (Hair et al. 2010). Related factor structure has been shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Factor Analysis*

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Cronbach Alfa |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|
| Organizational Support3 | 0,895 | | | | | | 0.922 |
| Organizational Support2 | 0,846 | | | | | | |
| Organizational Support1 | 0,829 | | | | | | |
| Organizational Support4 | 0,787 | | | | | | |
| Organizational Support10 | 0,709 | | | | | | |
| Organizational Support9 | 0,706 | | | | | | |
| Organizational Support5 | 0,698 | | | | | | |
| Organizational Support8 | 0,663 | | | | | | |
| Organizational Commitment4 | | 0,846 | | | | | 0.713 |
| Organizational Commitment3 | | 0,671 | | | | | |
| Organizational Commitment1 | | 0,539 | | | | | |
| Balanced Processing of Information8 | | | 0,963 | | | | 0.902 |
| Balanced Processing of Information6 | | | 0,866 | | | | |
| Balanced Processing of Information5 | | | 0,851 | | | | |
| Balanced Processing of Information7 | | | 0,541 | | | | |
| Transparency15 | | | | 0,938 | | | 0.806 |
| Transparency14 | | | | 0,625 | | | |
| Internalized Moral Perspective11 | | | | | 0,687 | | 0.722 |
| Internalized Moral Perspective10 | | | | | 0,532 | | |
| Internalized Moral Perspective12 | | | | | 0,469 | | |
| Awareness 3 | | | | | | 0,76 | 0.704 |
| Awareness 4 | | | | | | 0,552 | |

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

Hypothesis Test and Results

Later, correlation analysis has been conducted. As seen in the correlation analysis in Table 2, all factors are related to each other in 1/1000 significance level. According to the results of correlation analysis, the strongest correlation relationship has been seen in the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment ($r=0,713$; $p = 0,000 < 0,001$).

Table 2. *Correlation Results*

| | | Awareness | Internalized Moral Perspective | Transparency | Balanced Processing of Information | Organizational Support | Organizational Commitment |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Awareness | Pearson Correlation | 1 | | | | | |
| Internalized Moral Perspective | Pearson Correlation | 0,414** | 1 | | | | |
| Transparency | Pearson Correlation | 0,475** | 0,548** | 1 | | | |
| Balanced Processing of Information | Pearson Correlation | 0,576** | 0,453** | 0,651** | 1 | | |
| Organizational Support | Pearson Correlation | 0,512** | 0,441** | 0,531** | 0,589** | 1 | |
| Organizational Commitment | Pearson Correlation | 0,424** | 0,379** | 0,510** | 0,537** | 0,713** | 1 |

As seen in Table 3, regression analysis has also been applied with the aim of testing the hypotheses and defining the direction of relations in our hypothesis. 3 different regression models used in order to test the above mentioned hypothesis and the assumptions of Baron and Kenny (1986) has been tested in the analysis. As the results analysis examined in details, we saw that results of the first model confirms the assumption of first hypothesis, namely authentic leadership style has a positive effect on organizational commitment of followers ($R^2: 0,341^{***}$, $t: 6.008$). Thus H1 hypothesis is accepted. However, one of the subdimensions of authentic leadership, namely internalized moral perspective did not have a statistically significant positive effect on organizational commitment. Furthermore, in the second regression model, the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment has been tested. Results confirmed the second hypothesis of the study, thus the positive effect of perceived organizational support on organizational commitment has been confirmed ($R^2: 0,506^{***}$, $t: 10.168$). And lastly, in order to see the availability of mediator effect of perceived organizational support in the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment the third regression model has been designed. According to regression results ($R^2: 0,531^{***}$, $t: 5.510$) the third hypothesis of the study has been accepted. Results of the study confirms in the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment when perceived organizational support is added to the model the effects of subdimensions of authentic leadership disappears and the positive effect on organizational commitment occurs through perceived. On the other hand, when models are analyzed it has been examined that R^2 explanation value is always between the range of %32 to %55. In all of the three models of our hypothesis independent variables are all powerful enough in explaining the dependent variables, with satisfactory levels of goodness of fits.

Table 3. *Regression Models*

| Independent Variable | Organizational Commitment | | Organizational Commitment | | Organizational Commitment | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|---------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|----------|
| | Beta | t | Beta | t | Beta | t |
| Constant | 1.395 | 6,008*** | 1.484 | 10,168*** | 1.096 | 5,510*** |
| Awareness | 0,135 | 2,066** | | | 0,006 | 0,114 |
| Internalized Moral Perspective | 0,078 | 1,219 | | | 0,014 | 0,254 |
| Transparency | 0,214 | 2,864** | | | 0,103 | 1,6 |
| Balanced Processing of Information | 0,288 | 3,842** | | | 0,129 | 1,945 |
| Perceived Organizational Support | | | 0,713 | 15,748** | 0,575 | 9,722** |
| F | 32,089 | | 248,006 | | 54,46 | |
| Adjusted R Square | 0.341 | | 0.506 | | 0.531 | |
| Sign. | 0.000 | | 0.000 | | 0.000 | |

In the first model, it is noteworthy that although the basic three dimensions of authentic leadership, namely, awareness, transparency and balanced processing of information have positive effects on organizational commitment of followers, internalized moral perspective of the leader did not have such a positive. In fact, it seems us meaningful, since the dimensions that have a positive effect on organizational commitment of followers are the dimensions explaining properties of authentic leaders affecting the lives of individuals in organizational context whereas internalized moral perspective dimension is about the leaders' themselves and about their inner morality which may not be seen by the others easily and may not effect their daily lives in the organization, thus will not affect their levels of organizational commitment. And when both perceived organizational support and authentic leadership have been put into the regression model, we have witnessed that these three dimension lost their statistically significant effect on the organizational commitments of followers and the positive effect on organizational commitment has occurred through the existence of perceived organizational support, that is why we can talk about the existence of perceived organizational support's mediator effect in the relationship between authentic leadership behavior and followers' organizational commitment.

Discussion and Recommendations

Heretofore, authentic leadership has been examined in many empirical contexts. Both scholars and practitioners focused on this unique leadership style that aims to increase positivity in organizational contexts. Most authentic leadership scholars agree that, authentic leaders are the kind of leaders that are well known with their high levels of awareness and their approach that reflects clarity about their values and ideas (Shamir, & Eilam, 2005, p. 396).

And most of these previous studies focus on the authenticity of authentic leadership style and tries to understand its effects on positive work outcomes. For example: from a practitioners point of view George (2007) interviewed 1,000 individuals that are perceived as successful leaders in their own organizations. Their analyzes showed that these leaders did not have some universal properties, traits, characteristics, skills or leadership styles that resulted in success. In fact, their leadership had its roots in their life stories. Consciously or subconsciously, these people were testing themselves through their own real-world experiences and values in all occasions and they were reframing their own life stories accordingly. The values that form the basis for authentic leadership are derived from one's own beliefs and convictions, but they can not be known unless they are tested under pressure (George, 2007, p. 4). Thus, they were able to discover their purpose in life and learn how to be authentic which contributed to their effectiveness and success (George, 2007, p. 2). Namely, the findings of the study confirmed that there are universal characteristics or traits of a leader. Authenticity is the most important antecedent of being a revered and successful leader (Baykal, 2017, p. 53). Results of the study was congruent with the assumption of authentic leadership approach, namely with the belief that leaders of organizations can lead more effectively, in case they express their own unique selves and styles in the organization (Gardner et al., 2011, p. 1142).

When the related literature is examined, it is seen that there is not another study with a similar research model. In other words, there are not any study examining the effect of authentic leadership on organizational commitment and examining the possible mediator effect of perceived organizational support in this relationship. However we can come across studies with parallel results regarding authentic leadership and organizational commitment relationship. For example; Rhoades, Eisenberger and Armeli (2001) examined the relationship among perceived organizational support, organizational commitment and employee turnover on 367 employees, results showed perceived organizational support increases commitment that in turn decreases employee withdrawal behavior.

Recently, Peus et al. (2011) examined the antecedents and outcomes of authentic leadership style and found that leader self-knowledge and self-consistency can be accepted as antecedents of authentic leadership whereas followers' job satisfaction, effectiveness and organizational commitment as outcomes. In another study Biswas and Bhatnagar (2013) tried to see the mediator effect role of engagement in the relationship between organizational support perceptions of followers and their person-organization fit with their organizations. Results of their study showed a direct effect of person-organization fit and perceived organizational support that gives a ti employee engagement, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Similarly, in the study on 606 nonexecutives, Guerrero, Lapalme, and Séguin (2015) applied a study examining the relationship between authentic leadership behavior and followers' motivation and commitment. It is found that, authentic leadership style contributes to higher levels of

motivation and commitment by increasing participative safety climate that is nourished from transparency and information sharing habits of authentic leaders. Kim et al., (2016) also conducted three different studies with employees in the United States and South Korea, in order to understand the interactive relationship between organizational support perceptions of followers and their organizational commitments. The study confirmed that perceived organizational commitment act as a moderator in the relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment.

Although there are not any previous study examining the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment. Shapira-Lishchinsky and Tsemach's (2014) had a quiet akin model. They explored the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors on 366 teachers from Israel schools. Results confirmed partial mediating effect of psychological empowerment in the above mentioned relationship. And in another study, Read and Laschinger (2015), examined effects of authentic leadership on new graduate nurses. Results of the study showed that empowerment mediates the relationship between authentic leadership of supervisors and follower nurses' relational social capital, which in turn effects negatively the followers' mental health symptoms and effects positively their job satisfactions.

As seen in this study and many previous study mentioned above, authentic leadership contributes to a considerable variety of positive organizational outcomes encompassing organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors etc. Since authentic leadership is a human focused empowering leader in those studies examining mediating effect of perceived organizational support and positive work outcomes have come about with positive results as in the case with our study.

Similarly, our findings regarding perceived organizational support and organizational commitment are in parallel with the results of studies that have focused on perceived organizational support-organizational commitment relationship in their research model. One of the most famous studies on this relationship is Rhoades et al., (2001) study, results of the study showed that perceived organizational support affect organizational commitment of employees. Similarly, Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) study which revealed the positive effects of authentic leadership on organizational commitment and organizational citizenship. Later, Panaccio and Vandenberghe (2009) examined the same relationship and their analyses showed that organizational commitment mediated the relationship between perceived organizational support and well-being. Furthermore, Zheng and Wu (2018), also studied effects of perceived organizational support, but different from our study, they examined its effect on professional commitment which can be considered as one's commitment to his/her profession rather than to his/her organization. Their results confirmed their assumptions, that is to say they found a positive effect of perceived organizational support on professional commitment.

As examined in our empirical study, authentic leadership is an empowering leader with its positive effects on organizational support perceptions of followers and ensures high levels of organizational commitment at workplaces. High levels of awareness, objectivity, transparency and authenticity of authentic leaders make them reliable and supportive leaders in the eyes of their followers. So in order to obtain positive work outcomes, especially organizational commitment embracing authentic leadership behavior is a meaningful strategy that both pleases employees and contributes to positive work outcomes and positive organizational behavior.

Limitations and Future Research

The field research regarding this study has been conducted in Istanbul. It will be statistically more meaningful if the study can be expanded to all Turkey. And the study can be expanded to a greater number of sectors. And the study can be replicated as a cross cultural study, by this way Turkish example can be compared with the results of other cultures. Also the research model can be nourished by adding more positive organizational behavior concepts that may have a mediating effect in the relationship between authentic leadership behavior and organizational commitment of followers.

Ethical Declaration

In the writing process of the study titled "*Mediator Effect of Perceived Organizational Support in The Relationship between Authentic Leadership and Organizational Commitment*", scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed; No falsification was made on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic media for evaluation.

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TÜRKÇE GENİŞ ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, pozitif örgütsel davranışa ve pozitif örgütsel çıktılara yaptığı vurgu ile geleneksel örgüt çalışmalarından ayırt edilen, örgütsel yaşamda refahı artırma yeteneğine sahip bir düşünce okulu olan pozitif örgüt okulu ana odak nokta olarak belirlenmiştir. Pozitif örgüt okulu ve bu okuldan etkilenecek ortaya çıkan pozitif örgütsel davranış araştırmacılarına göre, uygun araçlar ve yöntemler kullanıldığında, örgütlerin ve bireylerin pozitif özlerine ulaşmak mümkündür ve söz konusu pozitif öze ulaşıldığında örgütün genelini ve tek tek örgüt üyelerini pozitif yönde değiştirmek ve geliştirmek gayet kolay olmaktadır. Kuşkusuz bireyleri ve örgütleri geliştirerek bu gelişim ve değişimi sağlamada ve daha pozitif örgüt iklimleri oluşturmada, pozitif örgüt bilimciler tarafından tavsiye edilen pozitif liderlik tarzlarının benimsenmesi büyük önem arz etmektedir. Bu anlamda pozitif örgüt okulu araştırmacıları tarafından özellikle benimsenen ve literatürde yaygın bir şekilde kabul görmüş olan otantik liderlik tarzı özellikle ele alınması gereken bir liderlik tarzı olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Aslında otantik liderlik, liderin ahlaki yargıları tarafından harekete geçirilen otantikliğinin, takipçilerinin algılarında, liderlerin ahlaki ve etik davranış ve tutumları ile meşrulaştırıldığı bir liderlik türüdür. Otantik liderlik literatüründe otantiklik, kendine karşı dürüst ve açık olmayı ve başkalarının taleplerine sorgusuz sualsiz uymanın aksine, kişinin kendi içsel değerlerine ve standartlarına güvenmeyi içerir. Otantik liderlik, liderin içsel değerleri ve normlarının, güçlendirilmiş takipçilerle uyumlu hale getirilmesini içerir, böylece otantik lider takipçileri ile otantik lider-üye ilişkileri yaratır. İlgili alan yazını incelendiğinde, daha önce yapılan çalışmalar pozitif örgüt okulu ve pozitif örgütsel davranış akımı tarafından benimsenen otantik liderliğin bireysel performans (Walumbwa vd., 2008), örgütsel bağlılık (Leroy, Palanski ve Simons, 2012; Walumbwa vd., 2010), takım performansı (Walumbwa et al., 2011) ve takım seviyesinde otantiklik (Hannah, Walumbwa ve Fry, 2011) gibi pozitif örgütsel çıktılar üzerinde etkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu anlamda, Luthans ve Avolio (2003) da otantik liderliği, pozitif liderlik yeteneklerini kapsayan, oldukça gelişmiş bir organizasyonel bağlamı içeren bir liderlik yöntemi olarak açıklar. İlgili literatüre göre otantik liderlik, takipçilerinin hem pozitif psikolojik kapasitelerini, hem de öz farkındalıklarını içsel bir ahlaki bakış açısı ile, dengeli bilgi analizi ve ilişkisel şeffaflık ile değerlendiren ve geliştiren, genelleştirilmiş bir pozitif etik çalışma ortamına dayanan ve onu destekleyen bir liderlik metodolojisidir. Bu anlamda liderler takipçilerinin gelişimine olanak tanıyan önemli aktörlerdir (Walumbwa et al. 2008, s. 94). Bu noktada, Gardner vd. (2005) otantik liderliğin görüldüğü organizasyonlarda, olumlu bir etik ortamın, otantik liderlerin ve takipçilerinin tamamlayıcı bir biçimde gelişmesine katkıda bulunacağını, organizasyondaki otantik ilişkileri geliştirdiğini ve takipçilerin örgütsel bağlılığına katkıda bulunacağını savunurlar. Bu noktadan hareketle, bu çalışmada, otantik liderliğin, Türkiye bağlamında örgütsel bağlılık üzerinde etkili olup olmadığını bulmaya çalıştık ve algılanan örgütsel desteğin otantik liderlik davranışı ile örgütsel bağlılık arasındaki ilişkide aracılık edici etkisinin olup olmadığını görmek istedik.

Bu çalışmaya ait saha araştırması, İstanbul'da hizmet sektöründe faaliyet gösteren orta ve büyük ölçekli işletmelerde çalışan 255 beyaz yakalı çalışan üzerinde uygulanmıştır. Araştırma, teorik kavramları anlama konusundaki yüksek yetenekleri, yüksek eğitim düzeyleri ve örgüt içerisinde hiyerarşik olarak üst seviyedeki yöneticilere ve liderlere olan yakınlıkları nedeniyle özellikle beyaz yakalı personel üzerinde yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmaya ait saha çalışması için veri toplamak amacıyla hem yüz yüze anket uygulaması yapılmış hem de online anket araçları tercih edilmiştir. Saha araştırmasında kullanılan anketlerde, otantik liderlik davranışlarını ölçmek için, Walumbwa ve arkadaşlarının (2008) şeffaflık, içsel ahlaki bakış açısı, bilgiyi dengeli ve adaletli değerlendirme ve öz-farkındalık boyutlarından oluşan 16 soruluk Otantik Liderlik Anketi, algılanan örgütsel desteği ölçmek için Stassen ve Ursel (2009) tarafından yaratılan ve Turunç ve ark. (2010) tarafından Türkçeye çevrilen 10 maddelik tek boyuttan oluşan algılanan örgütsel destek ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Örgütsel bağlılık için ise Fry'n (2003) spiritüel liderlik ölçeğinden örgütsel bağlılığı ölçen alt boyuttaki 5 soru alınmıştır. Veriler toplanırken katılımcılardan tüm soruları cevaplamaları istenmiş ve çalışmanın verileri SPSS 20.00 kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu çalışmaya ait ampirik araştırmanın sonuçları, araştırma modelinde öngörüldüğü gibi, çalışanları destekleyen ve güçlendiren yönü ile ön plana çıkan otantik liderliğin çalışanların örgütsel destek algıları üzerinde pozitif etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiş ve çalışanların algıladıkları örgütsel destek vasıtası ile çalışanların örgütsel bağlılık algılarını pozitif yönde etkilediği tespit edilmiştir. Otantik liderlik, insan odaklı ve çalışanı güçlendirici bir lider tarzı olduğu için, bizim çalışmamızda olduğu gibi literatürde otantik liderlik ve örgütsel bağlılık arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen diğer çalışmalarda da, söz konusu ilişki ile ilgili olumlu sonuçlar elde edilmiştir. Kısacası, otantik liderlik ile örgütsel bağlılık arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen araştırmamızın sonuçları, ilgili alan yazınındaki diğer önemli sayıdaki çalışma ile paralellik göstermektedir. Otantik liderlerin yüksek düzeyde farkındalıkları, nesnellikleri, şeffaflıkları ve özgünlükleri onları takipçilerinin gözünde güvenilir ve destekleyici liderler yapar. Dolayısıyla, özellikle otantik liderlik davranışını benimseyen liderler olumlu örgütsel çıktılar ve iş sonuçları elde etmek için, çalışanların memnuniyetlerini sağlarlar, böylece hem pozitif iş sonuçlarına ulaşırlar hem de çalışanların pozitif örgütsel davranışlarda bulunmalarına katkıda bulunarak daha pozitif örgüt iklimlerinin oluşmasına katkıda bulunurlar.