

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERPERSONAL TRUST, PEER SUPPORT AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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### Abstract

Interpersonal trust is one of the major themes which has a substantial role in managing human capital effectively. Accordingly, authors presumed that trust among peers creates a strong and positive affect on their level of organizational commitment and their supportive behaviors to each other. The aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between interpersonal trust, organizational commitment and peer support. In order to investigate this, a research is conducted to sales representatives working in building materials sector. The results represent that interpersonal trust has an effect on both normative commitment and peer support, whereas normative commitment only affects peer support.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal trust, Organizational commitment, Peer support.

## BİREYLERARASI GÜVEN, İŞGÖREN DESTEĞİ VE ÖRGÜTSEL BAĞLILIK İLİŞKİSİ

### Özet

Bireylerarası güven insan sermayesinin etkin yönetiminde önemli role sahip temel konulardan biridir. Buna paralel olarak yazarlar, çalışanlar arasındaki güvenin, örgütsel bağlılık düzeyleri ve birbirlerine karşı gösterdikleri destekleyici davranışları üzerinde güçlü ve pozitif yönde bir etki yarattığını öngörmüşlerdir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, bireylerarası güven, işgören desteği ve örgütsel bağlılık arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Bu amaçla, yapı market sektöründe çalışan satış temsilcilerine yönelik bir araştırma yapılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları, bireylerarası güvenin normatif bağlılık ve işgören desteği üzerinde etkili olduğunu öte yandan sadece normatif bağlılığın işgören desteğini etkilediğini göstermiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bireyler arası güven, Örgütsel Bağlılık, İşgören desteği.

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## **1. Introduction**

The topic of trust gained crucial importance as the business world faced the economic crises in the last ten years. From an organizational point of view, the concept has almost become synonym to organizational continuity.

It is obvious that any organizational goal can only be achieved by collaborative efforts of individuals. According to Hosmer [1], trust is the most effective way that provides this kind of collective behavior. Interpersonal trust, on the other hand, serves as an important lubricant in any social exchange system [2]. So it is interpersonal trust that creates collaboration in the organizations by making individuals believe that their efforts will be rewarded and their interests will be valued at both peer and organizational level. In this context, individuals who have trust for each other can foresee the intentions and behaviors of each other, believe in the benevolence, integrity and ability of each other[3] , creating a belief that their attitudes and behaviors will be reciprocated. It is this belief of reciprocity that creates peer support in organizations. Another important consequence of trust is observed to be organizational commitment. Tan and Lim [4] found that interpersonal trust determines commitment in organizations and that trust between peers creates a psychological link between them. In this context it is less likely that the employees will voluntarily leave the organization.

This research focuses on trust within organizations among peers. We try to find out whether peers support each other in an organizational environment, where they have trust for each other. According to our knowledge, trust studies that are conducted in Turkey mostly concentrate on trust between supervisors and employees [5] in inter organizational level and there are no studies focused particularly on Interpersonal Trust and Peer Support relation. So this study is distinctive as it reveals the relationship of interpersonal trust, peer support and organizational commitment. In this respect, we began our research by providing several definitions of trust and its components put forth in the literature. Then the meaning of peer support, commitment and their components are conveyed. We presume that there is a positive and strong relationship between interpersonal trust, peer support and organizational commitment. In order to compose our model, we tried to reveal the relationships of interpersonal trust, peer support and organizational commitment based on both theoretical and empirical studies and their findings in related literature.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Interpersonal Trust**

In literature the most well accepted definition of trust is “willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party” [3]. On the other hand interpersonal trust is defined by Rotter [6] as an expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual can be relied upon. Another well accepted definition of interpersonal trust is made by

McAllister [7] as the extent to which a person is confident in, and willing to act on the basis of the words, actions, and decisions of another.

Interpersonal trust has cognitive and affective foundations [8]. Trust is cognition-based in that “we choose whom we will trust in which respects and under what circumstances, and we base the choice on what we take to be ‘good reasons,’ constituting evidence of trustworthiness” [8]. Cognitive trust is a trustor’s confidence or willingness to rely on the trustee’s competence and reliability [9]. It is argued that cognitive trust arises from an accumulated knowledge that allows one to make predictions, with some level of confidence, regarding the likelihood that a trustee will act as expected. In organizations, the extent to which employees will have cognition-based trust in peers may depend on the success of past interactions, the extent of social similarity, and organizational context considerations [10]. Past interaction will be one of the components because working relationships are typically personal and extend over time, so it is possible to consider the track record of peers, or how they have carried out role-related duties in the past, when assessing trustworthiness [11]. Social similarity is another important component of cognitive trust. Groups of individuals with similar fundamental characteristics found to have ability to create and maintain trusting working relationships because of their tendency to group themselves with others on the basis of objective attributes such as race, age, and gender [12] and that such internal classifications influence beliefs and attitudes [7]. Last component to generate cognition-based trust is formal organizations. Educational institutions, professional associations, and credentialing agencies manufacture trust by providing guarantees through certification manifesting that individuals meet standards for acceptability in a larger professional community [10].

Trust is affective; regarding emotional bonds between individuals [8]. People make emotional investments in this kind of trust relationship by expressing genuine care and concern for the welfare of partners, believe in the intrinsic virtue of such relationships and that these sentiments are reciprocated [7]. Affective trust is closely related to the perception that a partner’s actions are intrinsically motivated [9] and characterized by feelings of security and perceived strength of the relationship. So the emotional ties that link individuals are accepted to be the basic antecedent for trust. Utilizing organizational citizenship theory, altruistic behavior which can be defined as directly and intentionally aimed at helping a specific person in face-to-face situations may provide an attributional basis for affect-based trust [7]. Altruistic behavior is an extra-role and can be viewed as personally chosen, not directly rewarded [13]. Because affect-based trust is grounded on an individual’s attributions concerning the motives for others’ behavior, it should be limited to contexts of frequent interaction, where there are sufficient social data to allow the making of confident attributions [8]. So for affect-based trust to develop; people’s baseline expectations for peer reliability and dependability must be met before they invest further in relationships. So we can easily say that some level of cognition-based trust should exist in order to develop an extra-role conduct and affect based trust.

Whether it is cognitive or affective, trust enables cooperative human interaction. Peer support is one of the outcomes of this interaction and is becoming the center of many arguments on organizational effectiveness.

## 2.2. Peer Support

Peer support is accepted as an extent of social support. [14]. Wallace [15] defines social support as an interpersonal coping resource where one person helps the other and enhances their well-being. Carlson & Perrewe [16] state that social support refers to an interpersonal transaction that involves emotional concern, instrumental aid, information or appraisal. So social support includes emotional, instrumental and structural assistance provided by individuals or organizations. These forms of behaviors include listening to distressed workers, helping employees achieve promotion or providing flexitime for personnel in organizations [17]. As a variable of social support, peer support refers to the extent to which employees can count on their colleagues to help and support them when needed [18]. Supportive peer relationships in the workplace can be defined as deep associations with peers grounded on a sense of intimacy and trust, the sharing of thoughts and feelings, and the sense that one is able to seek help from the other [19]. According to Bacharach, Bamberger, McKinney [20], to facilitate this kind of climate, peers use empathetic skills like listening, probing to action-oriented skills like providing advice or information. Major, Fletcher, Davis and Germano [21] distinguished peer support as affective and instrumental support. Affective peer support is a form of social support that peers offer by being sympathetic, listening to problems, and expressing care and concern. Instrumental peer support, on the other hand, is a tangible helping behavior offered by peers in response to specific needs like assistance with work responsibilities and switching schedules. In a similar way, Beehr [22] also categorized peer support along two dimensions, emotional support and instrumental support. According to Beehr, emotional support includes behaviors such as the provision of sympathy, caring, and listening and instrumental support includes behaviors that provide direct assistance to others, such as giving money, doing others' work, etc.

Peer support in organizations is believed to have many benefits. Padsakoff et al.[23] suggests that supportive peer relationships affect individual, group and organizational performance, and strengthens his argument as he points out the significant and positive effect of peer support on organizational performance outcomes. Another researcher Liu [24] states that emotional support from peers in the form of listening, caring, and interpersonal consoling may help individuals to concentrate better on their work where instrumental support provides individuals with instrumental help, such as assistance in using new techniques that contributes directly to task performance. As a result, peer support not only allows more cognitive and emotional resources to be focused on the task, but also allows one to perform at his or her optimal level by getting necessary help from others.

As discussed by Ito and Brotheridge [25], employees with social support may meet the expectations of their supervisors and peers by showing active approaches to problem solving through positive attitudes toward problem solving and hard work. Thus, employees with such job resources may be able to handle problems associated with stressors and strains [26]. Supportive relationships in the workplace have also been found to explain a high proportion of the variance in job satisfaction, particularly among workers in high-stress jobs [27]. Support may improve the recipient's psychological and physical well-being [20]. Bacharach, Bamberger and Vashdi [19] suggest that, the intimate or embedded ties underlying supportive peer relations encourage trust,

empathy, and a norm of reciprocity, thus facilitating information and knowledge exchange [28]. Information and knowledge exchange in turn may allow an organization respond to changes in its operating environment [29]. Supportive relations allow the emergence of cohesive networks among peers and because such networks facilitate norm enforcement [30], supportive relations may indirectly reduce the risk of social loafing [31] and allow the replacement of traditional and costly mechanisms of organizational control with more efficient, norm-based modes of organizational control [32; 29]. Bheer et al. [33] indicates that social support is characterized by a deeper level of communication. Beehr et al. [33] suggested that talking to others helps one to cope better with stressful situations at work, because it has therapeutic qualities and helps to release emotional tensions. Emotional support from peers in the form of listening, caring, and interpersonal consoling may also help individuals regain their emotional balance in times of personal or organizational trauma [34]. Other findings about benefits for employees suggest that supportive peer relationships enhance the likelihood of career success [35], enhance self-esteem and professional identity [36]. Most recently, Gersick and her colleagues [37] concluded that for many workers, supportive workbased relationships are “valued ends in themselves” rather than simply a means of career advancement. Finally researchers emphasize that the interpersonal facilitation and helping at the root of supportive peer relations affect individual job performance [38], group and organizational performance [23], can lessen negative organizational outcomes such as turnover intentions [39] and lead to positive organizational outcomes such as job performance [40], organizational commitment [41], and job satisfaction [42]. [17]

### 2.3. Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is a concept that plays a key role in the relationship of the individual and the organization [43]. Gilbert and Ivancevich [44] define organizational commitment as a factor that strengthens the psychological connection between the two. Meyer & Allen [45] discuss organizational commitment as a psychological state that characterizes the employee's relationship within the organization and has implications for the decision to continue membership.

Organizational commitment can be analyzed in three components being affective, continuance and normative commitment [46].

*Affective commitment* is related to the employees' sense of belonging, attachment and loyalty to the organization. [47]. Employees who are committed tend to remain in the organization [45]. Affective commitment can emerge as a result of positive experiences and encounter within the organization, making employees believe that the organization supports and treats them fairly. Moreover when the organization knows how to value their contribution employees can develop a sense of capability and self worth which in turn reinforces their affective commitment. Affective commitment can also develop from psychological rewarding experiences. Namely, an employee can develop affective commitment when the organization lets him or her feel at ease, either by satisfying needs, meeting expectations or enabling the attainment of the employee's goals [48].

As to *continuance commitment*, employees are aware of the cost associated with leaving the organization. So these employees tend to stay in the organization in order to maintain benefits such

as regular income, payment for retirement and some certain status. Continuance commitment refers to the propensity to remain in the organization which increases due to the perceived cost of leaving [49]. The perceived cost acts as a restraint on leaving and results from accumulation of side bets and lack of employment alternatives. Because continuance commitment develops out of the perceived cost, employees should be aware of these benefits and losses. Therefore different workers who encounter identical situations may experience different levels of continuance commitment [50]. Michael, Court, Petal [48] states that continuance commitment is not the commitment desirable for an organization, and stresses that while employees who perceive the cost of leaving the organization as heavy, prefer to stay, their contribution to the organization is not positive.

Finally *normative commitment* reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment because of the favors that employees had received from the organization [46]. This form of commitment leads employees to stay in the organization due to a sense of loyalty or duty and because they feel that this is the right thing to do [50]. Normative commitment can also develop out of internal pressures that result from norms. Individuals derive these norms from socialization processes in the family and the surrounding culture and this internalization leads them to enhance loyalty to the place of work and commitment to act in a manner that fits the organization's goals and interests [51].

#### **2.4. The Knowledge On The Relationship Between Peer Support and Interpersonal Trust**

Related literature argues that trust plays an important role in social relationships [8; 10 cited in 24]. Research in trust has consistently supported the notion that trust facilitates cooperative behaviors [52: 53: 10 cited in 24]. Research of Bacharach et al.[19] corroborated this view grounding supportive peer relationships on trust as a form of cooperative behavior. Bouty [53] found that exchanges of strategic resources only occurred in social relationships that are characterized with mutual trust. In addition, trust may be a way that people use to build and maintain social relationships [54]. For instance, the expression of trust may generate positive feelings on interaction partner, and therefore, yield positive reactions [55]. It has been argued that the existence of high level of affect based trust leads individuals to behave in a similar way as those in communal relationships [56], here people tend to take on their partner's problems as their own, keep track of the partner's needs, and provide help or assistance accordingly [57; 7]. It also has been proposed that affect-based trust leads to a high level of interpersonal citizenship behaviors [7] with the increased awareness of peers' needs. Collins & Miller [58] stated that trust is associated with a high level of self-disclosure which makes it more likely for peers to be aware of opportunities to provide social support. For example, self-disclosure regarding the lack of needed skill to accomplish a certain task (help seeking behaviors) is more likely to occur in high trust context. This, in turn, helps others to become aware of one's needs [59], and provide support accordingly [24].

In this context, Yong, Chua, Ingram, Morris [60] discussed the role of trust in social exchanges in professional networks under the dimensions of friendship and social support, task advice and career guidance. They tested the effects of each type of these network ties on trust and show

how each one is differentially associated with cognition- and affect-based trust. As for friendship ties, friendship between two individuals typically starts with interpersonal attraction [61; 62], and grows with increased interaction. At the dyadic level, friendship enhances cooperation, encourages resource sharing [63], and facilitates open communication [64]. Through friendship, individuals also find mutual care and concern, social comfort, and enjoyment [65]. These patterns of interpersonal interaction have been in turn linked to the development of emotional attachment [66], intimacy [67] and altruistic behavior [68]. Given that friendship embodies socio-emotional engagements and positive perceptions of another's motives, the presence of a friendship tie is especially likely to indicate affect-based trust. So the elements of friendship are the foundations which affect-based trust is built upon. As to task advice ties, we know that in professional networks, after an employee provided other with useful task related advice, the employee is likely to identify the other as someone who has the relevant expertise, competence or experience in the given task domain. This attitude demonstrates cognition-based trust. Hence, the presence of a task advice tie is found to be positively associated with cognition-based trust [60]. As to career guidance ties, when an employee is a provider of useful career advice and opportunities for a given employee, two types of perceptions are invoked. First, recipient is likely to perceive provider as having relevant experience, competence, and access to valuable information which is not available to him or her. This perception is a foundation for cognition based trust. Second, recipient is also likely to perceive provider as genuinely caring about him or her, because provider is willing to provide career guidance and advice. As a result, recipient develops affect-based trust for these providers. In sum, a recipient is likely to have both increased cognition- and affect-based trust in the provider who supports him or her with career guidance information. In the light of these arguments, we compose our first hypothesis as follows:

**H1:** Interpersonal trust has strong and positive effect on peer support.

## **2.5. The Knowledge On The Relationship Between Peer Support and Organizational Commitment**

The relationship between peer support and commitment is analyzed by numerous empirical studies. [69; 70; 15]. According to the study of Mossholder, Richardson and Settoon [71], in a commitment system, employees and the organization are viewed as having high regard for one another and incentives promote social behaviors like knowledge sharing, peer support and helping. In the study of Emmerik, Euwema and Bakker [72], it is found that social support from peers has direct positive relationship with commitment. Paralel to the results of this research, Rousseau and Aube [73] stated that peer support has an additive effect on affective commitment in the organization. Allen & Mayer [74] also highlighted the fact that organizational commitment produces some level of support. They mentioned that employees who are highly committed, identify themselves with their organization and actively involve in their workplace [75]. Moreover, they stated that "employees with strong affective commitment remain with the organization because they want to do so".

Some other researchers also argued that peers can provide support creating positive work experiences and lead individuals to become affectively tied to the organization. For instance,

according to Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe [76], support provided by peers may increase employees' comfort within the organization by fulfilling needs for esteem, approval and affiliation. Thus, employees have emotionally satisfying work experience and, with time, develop an emotional attachment to their employing organization. According to Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro [77] employees' need to feel comfortable in the organization both physically and psychologically in order to feel commitment to the organization and organizational support were found to correlate with affective commitment. So in a way, results of the study of Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe [76] were the confirmation of the ones found by Eisenberger et. al. [77]

Existing research has found that organizational commitment is related to another important outcome; Perceived Organizational [77; 78]. Perceived support is believed to raise an employee's expectancy that the organization would reward greater effort in accordance with organizational goals. To the extent that the perceived support fulfill their needs for praise and approval, employees would incorporate organizational membership into self-identification and thereby develop positive emotional bonds to the organization. According to Eisenberger and Huntington [79] an effort-outcome expectancy and affective attachment would increase an employee's efforts to meet the organization's goals through greater attendance. In brief, under the norm of reciprocity, employees with high POS would have a feeling of obligation to repay the organization in terms of organizational commitment. Positive relationship between organizational commitment with POS has also been confirmed in studies conducted by Loi et al. [80]. They hypothesize that POS mediates the positive relationship between procedural justice and organizational commitment. Meyer et al.'s [81] on the other hand confirms, this argument stating that organizational support is a possible mechanism through which other work experience variables (e.g. organizational justice) influence affective commitment.

As we mentioned in the introduction section, limited number of studies have been conducted on social support in Turkey. In a study where peer support profiles of academicians are investigated, peer support is found to be a lubricant that holds organizational commitment and goals of peers together. (Çelikten, 2003) Another study which studies the effect of organizational support on the intention to quit indicates that peers' job satisfaction and commitment increases as they are supported by the organization [82]. Taking these studies into consideration, we composed our second hypothesis as follows:

**H2:** Organizational commitment has strong and positive effect on peer support.

## **2.6. The Knowledge On The Relationship Between Interpersonal Trust and Organizational Commitment**

In our research the concept of "organizational commitment" is suggested to have a relationship with both trust and peer support. The trust-organization commitment relationship is based on the study of Bentain [83] as he demonstrated the link between decreasing trust and decreasing commitment in the workforce which in turn increases turnover relationship and the study of Tan & Lim [4] as he demonstrated the mediating role of trust in organization on the relationship between coworker trust and organizational commitment.



Cook and Wall [84] conducted one of the most highly referenced studies on relationship between trust in co-workers and organizational commitment. They studied the quality of working life variables which are identified as trust, organizational commitment, and fulfillment of personal needs and developed three measures for each of them. Cook and Wall [84] found that the faith in, confidence in and trust in coworkers as important variables contributing to the formation of organizational commitment. In 1995, Hrebiniak and Alutto found that organizational trust was a major predictor of employee organizational commitment. In the proceeding year, Iverson and McLeod [85] made a research on the relationship of commitment, distributive justice, and benevolence for hospital nursing and paramedical staff. They found distributive justice and benevolence—both dimensions of trust--had significant impacts on the level of organizational commitment.

In related literature most researchers found a positive relationship between affective commitment and trust [86; 87; 88; 85; 89], and a negative relationship between continuance commitment and trust [86; 89]. In 1999 Nyhan[90] studied the relationship between trust and commitment in more than 600 employees from three separate public organizations. Trust was divided into two categories: interpersonal trust and systems trust. Nyhan [90] found that both interpersonal trust and systems trust were significantly and positively correlated with affective commitment. Spence-Laschinger et al. [89] researched the impact of trust on satisfaction and commitment of staff nurses within a central Canadian province. They found trust to be negatively related to continuance commitment but positively and strongly associated to affective commitment. Kwon [91] indicated the same significant correlation between interpersonal trust and affective and normative commitment. These results confirmed the results of the study of Kumar, Hibbard, and Stern [92]. They also found that the increasing trust positively impacts affective commitment, but negatively impacts calculative (continuance) commitment. In 2000, Tan and Tan [93] conducted a study on the antecedents and outcomes of trust. Results of this study showed significant positive relationship between trust in organization and organizational commitment. In 2003, Albrecht and Travaglione [94] conducted a similar study, but instead, concentrated on trust in public sector senior management and organizational commitment. Their study once again confirmed the positive relationship between trust and organizational commitment.

From a different point of view, Laka-Mathebula [95] studied the correlation between affect and cognition based trust and organizational commitment. They found a correlation between affect-based and cognition based trust and affective and normative commitment whereas found no correlation between affect and cognition based trust and continuance commitment. These findings imply that when employees trust their managers and peers, they are more likely to have positive attitudes toward the organization and display greater commitment, especially normative and affective commitment [96]. So employees who remain out of a sense of moral obligation tend to outperform those who feel no such obligation [97].

Results of the studies conducted in Turkey are not so different from the results of the ones mentioned above. Sağlam Arı [98] conducted a study for the employees in Turkish Banks intending to examine the relationship of employee commitment and the trust in supervisors and

found that a correlation exists between the affective and cognitive trust and employee commitment in Banks in Turkey. In 2006, Özbek [99] found similar outcomes referring a direct effect of trust in organizations on employee commitment. As for the components of commitment, Eser [100] points out a positive relationship between the trust in supervisor and the affective and normative commitment, whereas a negative relationship with continuance commitment. These findings are supported to some point by Demirel [101] who states that there is a positive and medium level correlation between organizational trust and the affective and normative commitment, whereas a negative relationship with continuance commitment.

These studies support the possibility of proving that a relationship exists between trust and commitment within organizations. So intuitively it would seem that trust has a significant and consistent impact on whether organizational commitment develops and is maintained. We composed our third hypothesis based on the mentioned arguments as follows:

**H3:** Interpersonal trust has a strong and positive effect on organizational commitment.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Data Collection and Analysis**

In this study data was collected using a convenience sampling approach where the researcher selects the most accessible subjects. In this sense 230 respondents who work as sales representatives in building materials outlets completed the survey. Data collection process started in October, 2011 and finalized in late November, 2011. Questionnaires including missing data were eliminated from the survey. After that 219 complete questionnaires fulfilling the minimum sample requirement of 200 for adequate application of structural equation modeling were used for further analysis [102]. Structural equation modelling approach aims to examine how well a proposed model with observed indicators and hypothetical constructs fits the data [103]. So in order to analyze data, the Amos 5 structural equation analysis package was used.

#### **3.2. Measurements**

All items were measured on a 1–5 Likert scale. Interpersonal trust was measured using the scale of Wasti and Erdil [104]. They developed this scale from the scale of Gillespie [105] in order to adapt it to Turkish culture. They found the reliability coefficients of each dimension of interpersonal trust as 0,65 and 0,75 respectively. Peer support was measured using the scale of Denton, Zeytinoglu and Davies [106]. Finally organizational commitment was measured using the items borrowed from the dissertation of Tolay [107]. Tolay developed the scale of Meyer, Allen and Smith [46] and found the reliability coefficients of the later scale as 0,80 , 0,70 and 0,80 respectively for each of the dimension of organizational commitment Meyer et al. indicated.

#### **3.3. Data Characteristics**

In this study 219 responses were analyzed. Looking at the demographic data, we found that % 44,37 of the respondents were male and % 55,7 were female. As to the age distribution, our sample consists of % 38,8 under 25, % 53 between 25–34, % 6,8 between 35–44 and % 1,4 between

45 and older. Furthermore % 32 of the respondents were married while the rest were single. Educational degrees of the respondents were found to be as % 56,2 high school degree, % 49,2 undergraduate degree and % 0,09 graduate degree. Finally the percentage of the respondents who are holding managerial positions and who are not holding managerial positions are respectively % 20,1 and % 79,9.

### 3.4. Modeling Process and Model Evaluation

At the first stage of the modeling process, an explanatory factor analysis was applied to both interpersonal trust, organizational commitment and peer support scales by using the SPSS 17.0 package program. A varimax-rotated principal component analysis was used as the method of the factor analysis. In order to determine the items to include in interpretation of a factor, 0.4 was chosen as the cutoff point. In this sense 4 items were excluded from the organizational commitment scale by this analysis.

For the interpersonal trust scale, two factors with eigenvalues greater than one explained 55.3% of the variance. The two factors were labeled as Cognitive Trust (factor 1) and Affective Trust (factor 2). Then they were tested for reliability which was evaluated by assessing the Cronbach's alpha coefficients that were found to be 0,794 and 0,791 for the factor 1 and factor 2 respectively. Table 1 displays the items, factor loadings, eigenvalues, and Cronbach's alpha scores.

**Table 1. Explanatory Factor Analysis of Interpersonal Trust**

	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalues	Explained Variances
Interpersonal trust			
Factor 1 Cognitive Trust ( $\alpha=0,794$ )*			
I depend on my colleagues to handle an important issue on my behalf.	,812	3,85	% 28,057
I rely on my colleagues in work-related judgements.	,798		
I rely on my colleagues to let them have the control of work.	,777		
I rely on my colleagues to represent my work accurately to others.	,634		
I depend on my colleagues to back me up in difficult situations.	,598		
Factor 2 Affective Trust ( $\alpha=0,791$ )*			
I share my personal feelings with my colleagues.	,785	1,70	% 27,248
I share my dreams with my colleagues.	,763		
I discuss my personal and work-related problems with my colleagues.	,720		
I share my personal beliefs with my colleagues.	,711		
I open my hearth to my colleagues.	,628		
Total			% 55,305

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.819

\* Reliability Measure (Cronbach's Alpha)

Similar to the procedure described above, 3 factors of Organizational Commitment were labeled as Affective Commitment (factor 1), Continuance Commitment (factor 2) and Normative Commitment (factor 3). Table 2 displays the items, factor loadings, eigenvalues, Cronbach's alpha scores (0,833, 0,594, 0,795 respectively for each factor) and total explained variance (%57,8). Here we observed that the dispersion of the items beneath the factors show a different dispersion comparing to the original scale. So the factors are named based on the similarity to the original scale. This difference in the perception of the items may emerge from the differences of the cultures of the respondents. The third scale, peer support is represented by one factor which is constituted by question 11, 12, 13 and 14. The factor has the eigenvalue of 2,33 and %58,260 of total explained variance. The reliability of the factor, determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0,758.

**Table 2. Explanatory Factor Analysis of Organizational Commitment**

Organizational Commitment	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalues	Explained Variances
Factor 1 Affective Commitment ( $\alpha=0,833$ )*			
I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization.	,864	2,894	% 20,668
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.	,819		
I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization.	,813		
Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	,676		
Factor 2 Continuance Commitment ( $\alpha=0,594$ )*			
I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.	,798	1,844	% 13,172
One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of alternatives.	,761		
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization right now.	,549		
Factor 3 Normative Commitment ( $\alpha=0,795$ )*			
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization.	,732	3,354	% 23,960
This organization deserves my loyalty.	,705		
I owe a great deal to my organization.	,684		
I would feel guilty if I left my organization now.	,653		
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.	,652		
I would not leave my organization now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.	,635		
It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.	,468		
Total			% 57,8

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.807,

\* Reliability Measure (Cronbach's Alpha)

After the explanatory factor analysis step, a confirmatory factor analysis was applied to interpersonal trust and organizational commitment factors respectively using Amos program. Table 3 displays the standardized loadings and item reliability of the interpersonal trust factor. As suggested by Kline [108], the factor loadings of observed variables should be upper than 0,5. Accordingly, no factor was eliminated for the factor of interpersonal trust.

**Table 3. Measurement Scale Properties of Interpersonal Trust Factor**

Constructs and indicators	Standardised loadings	Item reliability	C.R.	P
<b>Cognitive Trust</b>				
I depend on my colleagues to handle an important issue on my behalf.	,764	,584	Fix to 1	
I rely on my colleagues in work-related judgements.	,749	,560	9,941	***
I rely on my colleagues to represent my work accurately to others.	,575	,331	7,776	***
I rely on my colleagues to let them have the control of work.	,713	,508	9,555	***
I depend on my colleagues to back me up in difficult situations.	,523	,274	7,071	***
<b>Affective Trust</b>				
I share my personal feelings with my colleagues.	,736	,541	Fix to 1	
I open my hearth to my colleagues.	,591	,349	7,653	***
I discuss my personal and work-related problems with my colleagues.	,722	,521	7,071	***
I share my dreams with my colleagues.	,635	,403	8,163	***
I share my personal beliefs with my colleagues.	,606	,368	7,837	***

At this stage of the analysis, the relative chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$ ), goodness of fit indices (GFI) and comparative fit indices (CFI) are chosen to test how well the CFA measurement fits the data.  $\chi^2/df$  should be less than 3 [108], GFI and CFI should be equal or greater than 0,90 [109]. As a result, the overall fit of the measurement model of interpersonal trust factor were found as follows:  $\chi^2=83.305$ ,  $df=34$ ;  $\chi^2/df=2,450$ , GFI = 0.928; CFI = 0.925 allowing us to believe that the data fits the model fairly.

Table 4 displays the standardized loadings and item reliability of the organizational commitment factor. As the factor loadings of question 22, 23 and 31 were below the level of 0,5, they were eliminated for the next step and the model is revised with 11 items.

**Table 4. Measurement Scale Properties of Organizational Commitment Factor**

Constructs and indicators	Standardised loadings	Item reliability	C.R.	P
Affective Commitment				
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization.	,778	,605	Fix to 1	***
I do not feel “emotionally attached” to this organization.	,758	,574	11,262	***
I do not feel like “part of the family” at my organization.	,880	,774	12,700	***
Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	,573	,329	8,277	***
Continuance Commitment				
I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.	,543	,294	Fix to 1	
One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.	1,000	,999	3,069	0,002
Normative Commitment				
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization.	,805	,648	Fix to 1	
I really feel as if this organization’s problems are my own.	,713	,508	9,810	***
I would feel guilty if I left my organization now.	,516	,267	7,097	***
This organization deserves my loyalty.	,662	,438	9,152	***
I owe a great deal to my organization.	,588	,346	8,123	***

As a result, the overall fit of the measurement model of organizational commitment factor were found as follows:  $\chi^2 = 87,946$ ,  $df = 41$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 2,145$ ,  $GFI = 0.934$ ,  $CFI = 0.943$ , again allowing us to determine that the data fits the model fairly.

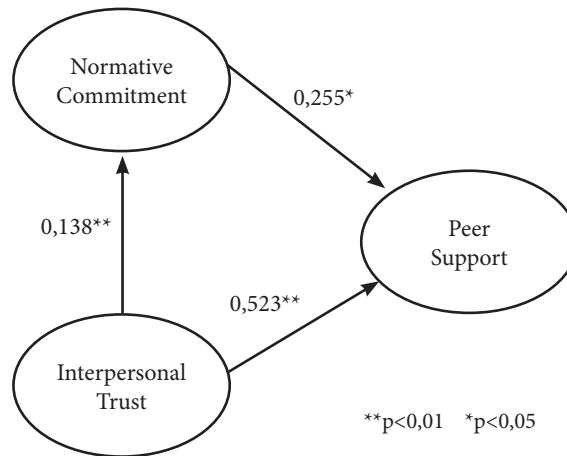
### 3.5. Testing hypotheses

After the explanatory and confirmatory factor analysis, a path analysis was used to test the hypothesis. Observed variables of interpersonal trust and organizational commitment factors were included to the analysis by the calculation of the arithmetic means. Thus we maintained two observed variables in the interpersonal trust factor (Cognitive Trust, Affective Trust) and three observed variables (Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment) for the organizational commitment factor.

Result of the path analysis showed us that there is no relationship between the two dimensions (affective, continuance) of organizational commitment and peer support factors. So we reorganized the organizational commitment factor by eliminating affective and continuance commitment variables, so that we can determine only normative commitment as the organizational commitment factor. Thereby the analysis was conducted with two observed variables in the interpersonal trust

factor, five observed variables in normative commitment factor and four observed variables in the peer support factor.

In this sense the overall fit of the structural model calculated by using Amos program was found to be as follows:  $\chi^2 = 90,710$ ,  $df = 38$ ;  $GFI = 0.928$ ;  $CFI = 0.924$ . According to these results we can conclude that the final model fits the data properly. Furthermore, all hypothesis of the study are accepted since the standardized structural coefficients are statistically meaningful as indicated in the figure 1 and table 5.



As a result, this study concludes that interpersonal trust has a positive effect on normative commitment ( $\beta = 0,438$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 3,903$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ) and peer support ( $\beta = 0,523$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 2,538$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ) whereas normative commitment has a positive effect on peer support ( $\beta = 0,255$ ,  $t\text{-value} = 1,955$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ).

**Table 5: Standardized structural estimates and tests of hypotheses.**

Path (hypotheses)	Estimates	t-value	Results
Interpersonal trust- Normative commitment	0,438	3,903	Accept **
Interpersonal trust- Peer Support	0,523	2,538	Accept **
Normative commitment - Peer Support	0,255	1,955	Accept *

\*\* Accepted at the level of 0,01

\* Accepted at the level of 0,05

#### 4. Conclusion

We claim that trust enables cooperative human interaction. Peer support is one of the outcomes of this interaction which refers to the extent to which employees can count on their colleagues to help and support them when needed [18]. As Bacharach, Bamberger, Vashdi, [19]

defines supportive peer relationships in the workplace can be defined as deep associations with peers grounded on a sense of intimacy and trust, sharing of thoughts and feelings, and the sense that one is able to seek help from the other. In this sense, by our study we found that interpersonal trust creates peer support in working relationships in a way that employees feel confident about sharing their experiences and feelings with peers, believe that they are supported by peers, can depend on them when a personal problem is faced and can take assistance in resulting a business issue. The result of our analysis matches the studies of Holmes & Rempel [57] and McAllister [7] who claim that trust leads individuals to behave in a way that people tend to take on their partner's problems as their own, keep track of the partner's needs, and provide help or assistance accordingly.

Our next claim was that there exists a positive and strong relationship between interpersonal trust and organizational commitment. Accordingly, our findings confirmed this relationship and the study of Bentain [83] where he demonstrates the link between decreasing trust and decreasing commitment in the workforce.

The relationship between organizational commitment and peer support was the last claim of our study. The findings showed us that only normative commitment has this relationship. We know that normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment because of the favors that employees had received from the organization [146] leading employees to stay in the organization due to a sense of loyalty or duty and because they feel that this is the right thing to do [50]. Dunham et al., [51] claim think that cultural issues may derive these norms from socialization processes coming out of family and the surrounding culture leading them to enhance loyalty to the place of work. In this sense we think that the commitment scale which was used in our study being developed for a different culture, causes differences on respondents' perceptions.

Our study has some limitations to be considered. The sampling method we used is convenience sampling which is a type of a non-random sampling. So the generalizability of our sample is limited. This study includes more quantification measures than qualitative measures. Future researchers may include more qualitative measures for obtaining additional information from the participants and also this survey can be extended to different sectors in further studies.



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