

**THE EFFECTS OF SOME INDIVIDUAL AND WORK
RELATED VARIABLES ON GROUP COHESION: A
STUDY WITH AIRPORT EMPLOYEES**

**BİREYSEL VE İŞ İLE İLGİLİ FAKTÖRLERİN GRUP
BAĞLILIĞINA ETKİLERİ: HAVA LİMANI
ÇALIŞANLARI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to find the important factors influencing group cohesion among airport employees in customer-contact services. 250 questionnaire forms were initially used for data gathering purpose in four main airports of Turkey by using self-report questionnaires. 198 valid forms from customer-contact ground staff have been obtained with a 79 percent response rate. All of the four scales with various numbers of items demonstrated an acceptable level of internal consistency.

Multiple stepwise regression on chosen individual and work related factors produced four factors (ethical optimism of airport employees, trust feelings to people, level of life satisfaction, and excessive work hours) influencing group cohesion by explaining the 35% of the whole model.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, müşteri ile doğrudan ilişki kuran hava limanı çalışanlarının grup bağlılığını etkileyen önemli faktörleri bulmak olarak belirlenmiştir. Veri toplamak amacıyla, Türkiye’de bulunan dört büyük hava limanında kendi kendine doldurulan 250 soru formu kullanılmıştır. % 79 cevaplama oranı ile, müşteri ile doğrudan ilişki içindeki 198 yer hizmetleri personelinin geçerli soru formu elde edilmiştir. Farklı sayıdaki maddelerden oluşan dört ölçeğin hepsinin kabul edilebilir bir iç tutarlılık düzeyine sahip olduğu görülmüştür.

Seçilmiş bireysel ve işle ilgili faktörler üzerinde yapılan çoklu basamaklı regresyon, tüm modelin % 35’ini açıklayarak grup bağlılığını etkileyen dört faktör (havalimanı çalışanlarının ahlaki iyimserliği, insanlara

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güven duyguları, yaşam memnuniyet düzeyi ve fazla mesai saatleri) olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Ethical optimism, group cohesion, life satisfaction, trust to people.
Ahlaki iyimserlik, grup bağlılığı, hayattan memnuniyet, insanlara güven.

1. INTRODUCTION

For many years, cohesion has been one of the most frequently studied of all human factors of group and organizational development (Carron and Brawley, 2000; Carron and Spink, 1995; Dies and Hess, 1979; Mbaatyo, 1988). Cohesion can be defined as a collectivist type of togetherness that exists between team members when team needs transcend individual differences and desires (Wright and Drewery, 2002). Cohesiveness or cohesion may be described as the extent of unification that enables a group or organization to survive, reach its maximum productivity and command commitment, loyalty, team spirit, team work, and solidarity from its members (Baird and Weinberg, 1981; Evans and Jarvis, 1980). In addition to its positive outcomes on team performance, cohesive groups are associated with greater job and personal satisfaction, increased effectiveness, greater communication among group members and lower absenteeism (Stogdill, 1972; cited in Wright and Drewery, 2002).

Because of its importance in organizational life, cohesion in groups was studied by investigating the effects of some individual and work related factors. Air sector employees' problems from this point of view deserve to be studied due to its growing significance in the economy. Since there are evidences on the relationship between group members' cohesion and some individual and work related factors, some other work related factors which are not intensively studied such as ethical optimism, trust feelings to people, level of life satisfaction, and excessive work hours should be tested for the same kind of association.

Group Cohesion

Cohesion is a complex and multidimensional construct that has been defined and operationalized in a variety of ways (Michalisin, Karau and Tangpong, 2004). However, the majority of theoretical and empirical treatments have emphasized members' attraction to the group and desire to remain in the group as cohesion (Hogg, 1992).

Langfred (1998) defined *cohesiveness* as how much members of a group like each other or as the amount of friendship between group members. Rempel and Fisher (1997) explained group cohesion as the primary motivation to remain in a group. Forsyth (1999) regarded cohesion as analogous to the "glue" that holds a group together or as the strength of the bonds linking group members to the group. He observed that cohesive groups share some common characteristics: (a) enjoyment and satisfaction, (b) a cooperative and friendly atmosphere (c) exchange of praise for accomplishments (d) higher self-esteem and less anxiety among group

members, and (e) greater member retention. Additionally, Seord and Backman (1964) stated that members of highly cohesive groups mutually accept each other's ideas, contribute equally to problem solving and are not likely to be adversely affected by the power and status structures within the group.

Most of the studies (Evans and Dion, 1991; Miesing and Preble, 1985; Mullen and Copper, 1994; Shaw, 1981) examined the relationship between cohesion and team performance and researchers have found a significant relationship between cohesion and performance.

Cohesion has been defined as the tendency of a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of instrumental objectives and the satisfaction of members' affective needs (Forrester and Tashchian, 2006). This definition recognizes cohesion as a two-dimensional construct representing interpersonal attraction and shared commitment to task. In our study we use the term "task cohesion" standing for the motivation toward achieving the group's goals and objectives. We use the term "social cohesion" to indicate motivation to develop and maintain social relationships within the group (Carron, Brawley and Widmeyer, 1998; Chang and Bordia, 2001; Gammage, Carron and Estabrooks, 2001).

In the literature on cohesion there are some studies that investigated the relationship between some individual and work related variables and cohesion. But some researchers found no relationship between age and cohesion (Harrison, Price and Bell, 1998; Weber and Donahue, 2001). Also, no other relationship between gender and cohesion was found (Doherty and Carron, 2003; Weber and Donahue, 2001;). In Doherty and Carron's (2003) study similar results were found in terms of tenure that there is no significant difference in perceptions of cohesion between members with more or less experience on their committees.

No other studies are found that examine the effects of other individual and work related factors that was searched in this study; especially ethical optimism, trust feelings to people and life satisfaction on cohesion.

Trust To People

The topic of trust has gained considerable attention in organizational studies, particularly in management (Lane and Bachman, 1996) and marketing (Moorman, Zaltman and Deshpande, 1992). So there are many definitions related to trust in literature. According to Riedel (1972) trust means a psychological state that enables individuals to accept vulnerability and place their welfare in the hands of other parties, expecting positive intentions or behaviors from other parties. Citizen participation involves risk and uncertainty. Administrators have to invest their limited resources in participation programs, but participation can be time-consuming, costly, unwieldy, chaotic, and unproductive. Sometimes they might even exacerbate conflicts, result in undue influence of uninformed or unqualified individuals, and become antidemocratic (Riedel, 1972).

Yang (2005) defines trust in citizens as administrators' beliefs that the citizens who are affected by their work (or whom they are serving), when involved in the administrative (or governing) process, will act in a fashion that is helpful (or beneficial) to administrators' performance (or goal fulfillment). Yang (2005) states that trust affects whether administrators proactively promote citizen participation. Although there are many studies in the literature, several issues still need further attention in this subject. First, the importance should be given to "what trust means for citizens and how it is developed". Second it worths comparing knowledge-based trust and affect-based trust because participation theories have placed emphasis more on educating citizens than on socializing with citizens, and some scholars have questioned the importance of affect-based trust in organizational settings (Cook, Hardin and Levi, 2005; Williamson, 1993). Third, it is important to differentiate trust in participation institutions and trust in citizens. Although some scholars neglect it (Cook et al., 2005), the possibility of trust in institutions has been emphasized in the literature with empirical evidence (Tyler and Huo, 2002). Fourth, the role of propensity to trust needs clarification. Although some scholars see a great value in it (Yamagishi, 2001), others question whether it predicts behavior in specific domains such as administrative decision making (Levi and Stoker, 2000).

Propensity to trust is a stable individual difference that represents an individual's dispositional tendency to trust or distrust (be suspicious of) other individuals (Rotter, 1980). Trust is a generalized expectancy to attribute benevolent intent to others and rely on information received from others about uncertain environmental states and their outcomes in a situation involving risk (Rotter, 1971). According to Rotter, an individual's general orientation regarding trust is especially salient in novel or ambiguous situations where individuals can not predict the behavior of others. Those who characteristically trust others, even under conditions of uncertainty, believe that they will be treated fairly and that over time their good acts will be reciprocated in some manner (Smith, Organ and Near, 1983). Thus they get involved in organizations and derive a positive self concept from positive experiences as organizational members.

Boon and Holmes (1991, p. 194) define inter-personal trust as 'a state involving confident positive expectations about another's motives with respect to one's self in situations entailing risk.' Similarly, Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998, p. 395) define it as 'a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another.'

Trust has been linked to a variety of positive work attitudes, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as well as important work behaviors such as job performance and organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Aryee, Budhwar and Chen, 2002; Watson and Papamarcos, 2002). Trust has also been found to be a critical factor in establishing cooperative relationships among organizational members (Bromiley and Cummings, 1995; Kwang and Burgers, 1997; Wells and Kipnis, 2001). Given the relation

between trust and important organizational outcomes and the fact that it is an essential facilitator of successful working relationships, it is not surprising that there has been a resurgence of interest in this topic by organizational researchers (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Kramer, Brewer and Hana, 1996).

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction conceptualizations have centered primarily on feelings of contentment with one's style of life or a comparison of one's aspirations with one's achievements. Though a well-established construct, life satisfaction often reflects some personal sense of reality which suggests a somewhat subjective quality because people differ in their goals and in how they feel their needs are being met (Sherman and Cooper, 1988).

Specific definitions of life satisfaction vary, but Diener (1994) asserts that global life satisfaction reflects a cognitive judgment of one's satisfaction with life as a whole. Emotions refer to specific on-line reactions to specific events that occur in people's lives, such as anger, joy, anxiety, and so forth. Life satisfaction reports typically refer to more general, enduring background appraisals encompassing one's overall life or major facets of one's life (Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith, 1999; Lazarus, 1991).

In other terms, life satisfaction includes both being satisfied and finding pleasure and is a cognitive judgment process (Deniz, 2006). During the lifetime of the individual, his/her life satisfaction level may stay constant or be changed. Life satisfaction is the individual's positive evaluation of his/her whole life quality. Life satisfaction is defined as the evaluation of the life quality of the individual regarding criteria which are determined by him/her. The concept of life satisfaction is related to the evaluation of a whole life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin, 1985; Veenhoven, 1996).

Ethical Optimism

The practices of individuals who are perceived to be successful within an organization can influence ethical behavior (Deshpande, 1996). If it is believed that unethical behavior is necessary to enjoy success, such a perception could provide strong motivation to act unethically (Hunt, Chonko and Wilcox, 1984). Among the factors that can influence ethical behavior is the set of practices of successful members within the organization. Previous research by Hunt et al. (1984) and Vitell and Davis (1990) indicated that examination of the relationship between success and unethical behavior is critical to the organization. Successful managers and employees serve as role models within the organization (Paine, 1994). Any unpunished unethical behavior sends a message to other organizational members that unethical behavior is acceptable. Conversely, if organizational members perceive that ethical behavior is necessary for success, such a perception, referred to as ethical optimism, will be a strong motivator for members to engage in ethical behavior (Deshpande, George and Joseph, 2000; Hunt et al., 1984; Vitell and Davis, 1990).

Hunt et al. (1984) studied ethical problems of marketing researchers. Specifically, they sought to identify the major ethical problems of marketing researchers, how extensive the problems of marketing researchers were, and ascertain the effectiveness of top management actions in reducing the ethical problems of marketing researchers. In order to respond to these questions they created a 13-item measurement scale. In their study, Hunt et al. (1984) found that only a small percentage of marketing researchers believed it necessary to compromise one's ethics to succeed. Moreover, they found that successful managers were not perceived to be less ethical than unsuccessful managers. However, when specific unethical behaviors were identified, a larger percentage of respondents believed that successful managers engaged in these unethical behaviors.

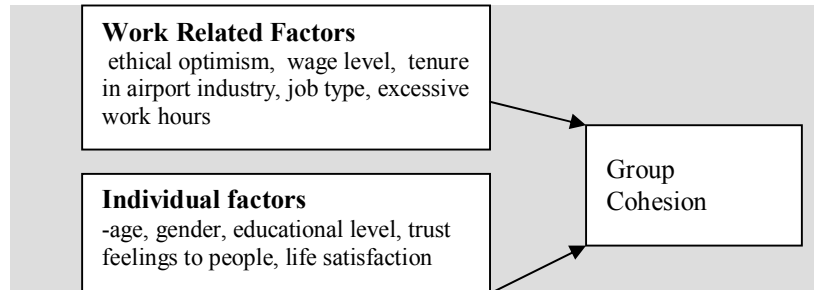
All of the past research on ethical optimism has generally focused upon managers and their beliefs. But Kincaid (1999) studied the employees in the restaurant industry and how their perception of ethical climate influences their belief that ethical actions are rewarded and unethical actions are punished. Also Kincaid, Baloglu and Corsun (2008) examined the actions of management and the subsequent affect on the ethical optimism of workers in the restaurant industry and they found significant differences between ethnic groups, men and women, and length of employment of workers.

Research Design

In this study the group cohesion as the dependent variable of the study designed to be influenced by some chosen individual and work related variables. It was assumed that there are linear relationships among chosen independent variables and group cohesion. Second research subject was that group cohesion of the staff in service encounters is an antecedent of group effectiveness and better performance in delivering service.

Work Related Factors were determined as *ethical optimism, wage level, tenure in airport industry, job type, work hours*. Individual factors were determined as *age, gender, educational level, trust to people, life satisfaction*. First, composite scores were obtained for scale variables as *trust feelings to people, life satisfaction, ethical optimism* constructs with multiple items. Then, composite scores obtaining procedure was applied to group cohesion construct with multiple items. After that, some non-scale variables as *age, wage level, tenure in airport industry* were coded in metrics and others like *gender, educational level, job type, excessive work hours* were dummy coded. In the end, group cohesion was planned to be regressed on all the independent variables to identify predictors.

Figure 1: The Simplified Proposed Model of Predicting Factors on Group Cohesion



Hypotheses

Hypotheses to be tested in the study were listed as follows:

H₁= The group cohesion among airport employees is significantly influenced by their *age*.

H₂= The group cohesion among airport employees is significantly influenced by their *gender*.

H₃= The group cohesion among airport employees is significantly influenced by their *educational level*.

H₄= The group cohesion among airport employees is significantly influenced by their *trust feelings to people*.

H₅= The group cohesion among airport employees is significantly influenced by their *level of life satisfaction*.

H₆= The group cohesion among airport employees is significantly influenced by their *level of ethical optimism*.

H₇= The group cohesion among airport employees is significantly influenced by their *wage level*.

H₈= The group cohesion among airport employees is significantly influenced by their *tenure in airport industry*.

H₉= The group cohesion among airport employees is significantly influenced by their *job type*.

H₁₀= The group cohesion among airport employees is significantly influenced by their *excessive work hours*.

2. METHOD

Sample and Survey Procedures

The respondents were randomly chosen from a population of airport staff employed in customer contact jobs in four main airports (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Antalya) of Turkey. Turkish airports have employed

around 5000 people in customer contact jobs excluding flying staff. The forms prepared for the survey were 250, the total number of forms obtained was 210. When invalid forms were excluded from the study 198 acceptable forms were left for the final analyses.

In the study, self-report questionnaires filled by the respondents are used for data collection. Participants were asked to attend survey on the voluntary basis. Survey was conducted in the airports during breaks and shift changes of the staff by the researcher and assisting person trained about questionnaire in a face to face interviewing procedure to increase reliability of data. Respondents were asked to consider their opinions toward work on research dimensions and for their individual and demographic characteristics.

Measures

All measures met the criteria of having at least 0.60 alpha coefficient as internal consistency (Nunnally,1978). All of the statements were scaled as (1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree) in Likert form.

Group cohesion ($\alpha= 0.79$) among airport employees was measured by 11-item hybrid scale of Hogg, Cooper-Shaw and Holzworth (1993) and Widmeyer, Brawley and Carron (1985) that proved to have internal consistency by having over 0,60 coefficient value. The scales used by these research groups were developed on both permanent sports groups and temporary small projects groups. The scale statements targeted two sub dimensions of group cohesion as task cohesion ($\alpha=0,80$) and social cohesion ($\alpha=0,63$) with satisfactory reliability indicators.

General feeling of trust to people ($\alpha= 0.71$) was measured by 8-item scale developed by Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) that produced satisfactory reliability coefficient in our sample as well. Sample item include “In general, people really do care about the well-being of others”. High scores on this scale indicate high trust feelings to people in general.

Life satisfaction ($\alpha= 0.81$) was measured by using the Satisfaction with Life Scale of Diener et al. (1985). This scale measures global life satisfaction and consists of five items. Sample item include “So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life”. High scores on this scale are indicative of high satisfaction with life.

Ethical optimism ($\alpha= 0.74$) and Management actions to ethical situations ($\alpha= 0.78$) scales were created and factor validated by Hunt et al. (1984) for investigating the ethical issues in work environment. This scale was used in this survey to determine the extent of potential ethical problems in an organization and the actions taken by management when unethical behavior is discovered in the organization. The scale is comprised of 11 items, including eight items measuring ethical optimism for members of the organization and three items measuring how management responds to unethical behavior in the organization. Sample items include “Successful managers in my company generally more ethical than unsuccessful managers” and “Top management in my company has let it be known in no

uncertain terms that unethical behavior will not be tolerated". Individuals with high scores on this scale are essentially "optimistic" about the existence of a direct link between success and ethical behavior, while those with low scores do not perceive a positive link between success and ethical behavior.

Age, gender, excessive work hours, job type, wage level, tenure in airport industry, and educational level of the respondents as non-scaled data were reported as direct answers to the questionnaire.

3. ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Missing Values and Descriptives

198 valid forms used in the study. Coding scheme and the detailed profile of the respondents and their organization can be examined in Table 1. The significance of correlations among all variables were illustrated at Table 2. Cases having missing values deleted listwise in the analysis procedure.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. De	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Sta.	Sta.	Statistic	Sta.	Sta.	Sta.	Std. Err	Sta.	Std. Error
Trust feel. to people	197	1,00	7,00	4,4226	1,18587	-,769	,173	,593	,345
Life satis.	197	1,00	7,00	4,1607	1,39398	-,276	,173	-,729	,345
Ethical opt.	198	1,75	7,00	4,0973	1,12069	,278	,173	-,070	,344
Management action	197	1,00	7,00	5,0761	1,45359	-,557	,173	-,363	,345
Wage level	157	111	5555	903,10	603,372	3,283	,194	21,690	,385
Age	192	18	52	30,43	6,773	,764	,175	,146	,349
Tenure in airport indus	191	1	559	69,08	75,274	2,187	,176	8,962	,350
Educational level	189	Deg. lower than uni.	University degree or upper	,50	,501	,011	,177	-2,021	,352
Job type	198	Jobs not related with sec.	Jobs Rel. with sec.	,64	,817	,748	,173	-1,092	,344
Excessive work hours	198	Excessive work hours	Regular work hours	,49	,501	,020	,173	-2,020	,344
Gender	198	male	Female	,47	,501	,102	,173	-2,010	,344
Valid N (listwise)	140								

Table 2. Correlations

		Group cohesion	Trust feelings to people	Life satisfaction	Ethical optimism	Management action	Wage level	Age	Tenure in airport	Educational level	Job type	Exc
Trust	Pear	,35										
	Sig.	,00										
	N	19										
Life	Pear	,46	,30									
	Sig.	,00	,00									
	N	19	19									
Ethical	Pear	-	-	-								
	Sig.	,00	,00	,00								
	N	19	19	19								
Manag	Pear	,14	,14	-	-							
	Sig.	,04	,05	,58	,55							
	N	19	19	19	19							
Wage	Pear	,04	,06	,22	-	-						
	Sig.	,58	,42	,00	,06	,42						
	N	15	15	15	15	15						
Age	Pear	-	-	-	,17	-	,10					
	Sig.	,00	,30	,60	,01	,05	,20					
	N	19	19	19	19	19	15					
Tenure	Pear	-	-	-	,11	-	,19	,65				
	Sig.	,05	,13	,78	,12	,11	,01	,00				
	N	19	19	19	19	19	15	18				
Educati	Pear	,02	-	,08	-	,06	,34	,04	,10			
	Sig.	,69	,17	,22	,05	,41	,00	,52	,16			
	N	18	18	18	18	18	14	18	18			
Job	Pear	,13	,05	,01	-	,04	-	-	-	,03		
	Sig.	,06	,47	,82	,15	,56	,00	,00	,00	,68		
	N	19	19	19	19	19	15	19	19	18		
Excessi	Pear	-	-	-	,20	-	,22	,24	,18	,06	-	
	Sig.	,00	,03	,60	,00	,08	,00	,00	,01	,34	,00	
	N	19	19	19	19	19	15	19	19	18	19	
Gender	Pear	,21	,02	,17	-	,10	,04	-	-	,02	,04	-
	Sig.	,00	,69	,01	,03	,13	,55	,00	,15	,72	,52	,
	N	19	19	19	19	19	15	19	19	18	19	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A Listwise N=198

As it can be seen at Table 2, there are correlations among group cohesion and trust to people, life satisfaction, ethical optimism, management action, age, excessive work hours and gender. Because of being correlations among them, these variables were included in the regression model.

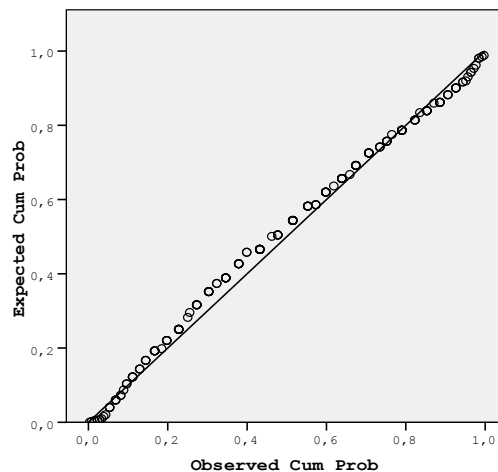
Basic Assumptions of Multiple Linear Regression

Two basic assumptions of multiple linear regression were tested with SPSS: normality and homoscedasticity (Hair, Anderson, Tahtam and Black, 1998, p. 71). Screening continuous variables for normality is an important assumption to be met in almost every multivariate analysis where drawing conclusions is intended. This assumption was both tested by Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and illustrated by P-P plot of the residual. Figure 2. shows that curve is very close to the diagonal line. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test resulted as $p = 0.389$ for group cohesion, and group cohesion was believed to have normal distribution by having value over 0.05 (Hair et al., 1998, p. 72).

Second assumption is the homoscedasticity that deals with the constancy of the residuals across values of the predictor variables. Durbin Watson test found 2,356 that is between 0 and 4 and very close to 2. So, independence of residuals were met (Field, 2005).

Figure 2. Normality Probability Plots For Group Cohesion

Normal P-P Plot of cohmean=MEAN(com1,com2,com3,com4,com5,com6,com7,com8,com9,com10,com11)



Multiple Linear Stepwise Regression Analyses

Meeting the assumptions indicated that the regression equation was valid and reliable. Stepwise regression analysis was conducted to investigate the effects of the independent variables and their interactions on the dependent variable. Coefficients given are in standardized beta values and significant at the level of 0.05 or better. The level of support of the estimated

coefficients for each hypothesis is based on the criteria that 0.00-0.05 indicates weak support, 0.05-0.30 indicates moderate support, and 0.30-1.00 indicates strong support.

Table 3: Results Of Multiple Linear Stepwise Regression Analysis

	Standardized coefficient beta	R2	ΔR2
Ethical optimism	-0.288	0.237	0.237
Trust feelings to people	0.183	0.305	0.068
Life satisfaction	0.251	0.343	0.038
Excessive work hours	-0.159	0.366	0.023

Table 3. displays the stepwise multiple regression analysis results. Group cohesion was regressed on individual and work related variables. *The level of ethical optimism, trust feelings to people, life satisfaction and excessive work hours* in order of effecting power significantly predicted group coherence among airport employees. $F(4, 135) = 19.505, p < 0.01$. The beta weights, presented in Table 3. suggest that *the level of ethical optimism* contributed strongly to predicting airport employees' group coherence and that, *trust to feelings to people, life satisfaction and excessive work hours* measures also contribute to this prediction moderately. The adjusted R squared value was 0.347. This indicates that nearly 35% of the variance in group coherence was explained by the model. This is a considerable effect regarding Cohen's criteria (1988).

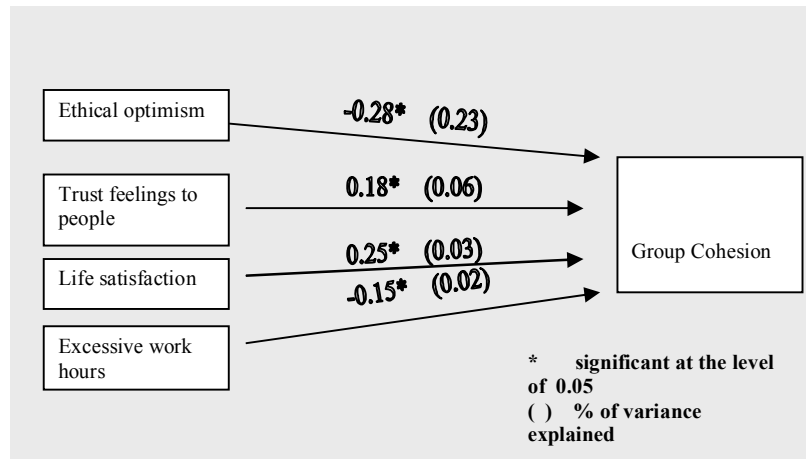
The relationship among dependent variable and its antecedents can be directly translated into the following equation for analysis according to tested hypotheses above:

The Stepwise Regression Model

$$\text{Group cohesion} = -0.28 \text{ ethical optimism} + 0.18 \text{ trust feelings to people} + 0.25 \text{ life satisfaction} - 0.15 \text{ excessive work hours.}$$

The final model of relationships were illustrated at Figure 3. regarding these findings.

Figure 3: The Final Model Of Predicting Factors On Group Cohesion



As it can be seen from the figure 3, H₄, H₅, H₆, H₁₀, hypotheses for *trust feelings to people*, *level of life satisfaction*, *level of ethical optimism* and *excessive work hours* were supported. But, H₁, H₂, H₃, H₇, H₈, H₉ hypotheses for *age*, *gender*, *educational level*, *job type*, *tenure in airport industry*, and *wage level* were not supported by the regression results.

4. DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As the main findings of the research, ethical optimism of airport employees, trust feelings to people, level of life satisfaction, and excessive work hours were found the most important factors on group cohesion. Contrary to our expectations, ethical optimism was found to have the most important and reverse influence on group cohesion. The least and reverse influence factor was excessive work hours. That is, as ethical optimism increase group cohesion decreases and as work hours increase group cohesion decreases.

Consistent with the prior research, no relationship was reported between age and cohesion (Harrison et al., 1998; Weber and Donahue, 2001). It means that the age of employees do not have any effect on group cohesion. Another finding related to gender, as gender has no effect on cohesion is consistent with the literature (Doherty and Carron, 2003; Weber and Donahue, 2001). In addition, a similar outcome with previous researches was found in terms of tenure as no significant difference in perceptions of cohesion between members with more or less experience on their committees (Doherty and Carron, 2003).

Some aspects of the study limit the generalizability of results. First, the sample was drawn primarily from a ground services airport staff population. Further research focusing on understanding group cohesion in customer-contact service encounters with flying staff would be more desirable. Also, some other individual and work related variables can be

studied in future researches to see the effects of other factors on group cohesion from a broader point of view. Thus, by understanding the most effective factors on cohesion, managers could consider these factors to increase group cohesion, and utilize the positive outcomes of group cohesion in business life.

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