The Mediating Role of Communication and Performance Perception in the Effect of Organisational Culture on Knowledge Sharing: A Research on Higher Education Institutions in Turkey

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Örgüt Kültürünün Bilgi Paylaşımına Etkisinde İletişim ve Performans Algısının Aracı Rolü: Türkiye'deki Yükseköğretim Kurumlarında Bir Araştırma

Abstract

The study aims to test the mediating role of performance and communication perception in the effect of organisational culture on information sharing. In line with this general purpose, it has been tested whether performance and communication perception influence the impact of the organisational culture in which the academics' working in a higher education institution work on their knowledge-sharing behaviours. Research data were collected using the knowledge-sharing, communication and performance perception, and organisational culture scales in the 2020-2021 academic year. The research population consists of 1199 academicians. All the academicians were sent an e-mail, 377 questionnaires were returned, and 362 valid questionnaires were obtained. The research data were tested with the structural equation model (SEM). It has been found that the organisational culture of individuals predicts knowledge sharing, and communication-performance perception has a mediating role in the relationship between organisational culture and knowledge sharing. This result revealed that communication and performance perception influence knowledge sharing and act as a mediator in the effect of organisational culture on knowledge sharing.

Keywords : Academicians, Communication Perception, Performance Perception, Knowledge Sharing, Organisational Culture.

JEL Classification Codes : M10, M12, M15.

Öz

Çalışmanın amacı, örgüt kültürünün bilgi paylaşımına etkisinde performans ve iletişim algısının aracı rolünü test etmektir. Bu genel amaç doğrultusunda, bir yükseköğretim kurumunda görev yapan akademisyenlerin bilgi paylaşma davranışları üzerinde örgüt kültürünün etkisini ve performans ve iletişim algılarının bu etki de aracı rolü olup olmadığı test edilmiştir. Araştırma verileri bilgi paylaşımı ölçeği, iletişim ve performans algısı ölçeği ve örgüt kültürü ölçeği kullanılarak 2020-2021 akademik yılında toplanmıştır. Araştırma evrenini bir kamu üniversitesinde görev yapan 1199 akademisyen oluşturmaktadır. Tüm akademisyenlere e-posta aracılığıyla araştırma anketi ulaştırılmış olup, 377 anket geri dönmüş ve 362 geçerli anket elde edilmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri yapısal eşitlik modeli (YEM) ile test edilmiştir. Analiz sonucunda örgüt kültürünün bilgi paylaşımını yordadığı ve örgüt kültürü ile bilgi paylaşımı arasındaki ilişkide iletişim-performans algısının aracılık rolü

üstlendiği tespit edilmiştir. Bu sonuç, iletişim ve performans algısının bilgi paylaşımını etkilediğini ve örgüt kültürünün bilgi paylaşımına etkisinde aracılık ettiğini ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Sözcükler   :   Akademisyen, Bilgi Paylaşma Davranışı, Örgüt Kültürü, İletişim ve Performans Algısı.

1. Introduction

Knowledge sharing is critical in creating and using new information, especially in knowledge-based organisations. Many factors affect the transformation of knowledge from implicit knowledge to explicit knowledge. Among the factors affecting knowledge sharing, we can list the personal characteristics of employees, such as personality traits and cultures, as well as organisational factors, such as organisational culture, structural features, and organisational structure. It is very important to share knowledge in enterprises with an R&D department and constantly renew themselves, producing and designing new products. Knowledge, knowledge sharing, and innovation are key factors for competitiveness and sustainability for business (Mumcu, 2020: 1). Establishing an organisational culture that primarily supports knowledge sharing plays a role in revealing implicit knowledge. The organisation should provide communication between the employees and maintain its healthy execution. Knowledge sharing can take place through healthy communication. All communication channels must exist in the organisation and be used effectively. The shared information and the production, creation, and design of new products, as a result, will also influence the performance of the employees. Therefore, the increase in the organisation's performance and profitability is directly proportional to the rise in the performance of the employees. For-profit organisations should create a culture that supports knowledge sharing to increase performance and profitability.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

2.1. Organisational Culture

The concept of culture studies sciences such as anthropology, sociology, and social psychology. Although organisational culture seems to belong to organisational behaviour, it is closely related to sociology, psychology, and social psychology. Organisational culture is one of the most critical factors affecting the behaviour of employees at work. Studies in organisational behaviour frequently investigate the effects of organisational culture on human behaviour in the organisation. Schultz (1995: 5) explains the focus of the organisational culture as "the beliefs, values, and meanings used by members of an organisation to grasp how the organisation's uniqueness originates, evolves, and operates". From a rationalist perspective, organisational culture is one of the tools used by the organisation to achieve its goals (Schultz, 1995: 14). The components of organisational culture can be expressed as organisational structure, knowledge management system, trust,

communication, leadership, and reward system (Al-Alawi et al., 2007: 23; Islam et al., 2011: 5902; Kathiravelu et al., 2014).

Many variables affect the organisational culture, which is affected (Allameh et al., 2011: 1229). Information technologies (IT) are also influenced by organisational culture (Chang & Lin, 2019; Shih & Huang, 2010). Organisational culture has a natural impact on knowledge sharing (Kathiravelu et al., 2014: 120-121; Kulkarni et al., 2006: 318; Tong et al., 2015; Zheng et al., 2013) and facilitates knowledge sharing behaviour and provides a suitable environment for knowledge sharing. Organisational culture is essential to managing knowledge effectively, and it can sometimes be one of the most critical obstacles to knowledge sharing (Allameh et al., 2011: 1225; Gold et al., 2001: 189). In other words, a negative organisational culture can hinder the success of knowledge management and knowledge sharing by creating an obstacle. However, a positive organisational culture also positively affects knowledge management behaviours (Alavi et al., 2006; Allameh et al., 2011: 1229; Chang & Lin, 2019: 129). In this regard, organisational culture is an essential factor that facilitates knowledge management activities and enables work more effectively (Alavi et al., 2006; Al-Tit, 2016). One of the purposes of knowledge management in the organisation is to create a culture of sharing knowledge (Kulkarni et al., 2006: 318). Studies examining the relationship between knowledge management, knowledge sharing, and organisational culture have gone one step further and revealed the concept of "knowledge sharing culture" (Smith & McKeen, 2002; Powers, 1999).

There are many studies examining the relationship between organisational culture and knowledge management (Allameh et al., 2011; Andam, 2017; Fettahlıoğlu et al., 2017; Fong & Kwok, 2009; Li et al., 2013; McManus & Loughridge, 2002; Nayır & Uzunçarşılı, 2008; Prado-Gascó et al., 2017) and also examining the relationship between organisational culture and knowledge sharing (Al-Alawi et al., 2007; Ardichvili et al., 2003; Bock et al., 2005; Bures, 2003; Eaves, 2014; Ghasemi et al., 2014; Jo & Joo, 2011; Long & Fahey, 2000; Lyu & Zhang, 2017; Islam et al., 2011; Issa & Haddad, 2008; Rivera-Vazquez et al., 2009; Riege, 2005; McDermott & O'Dell, 2001; Pushpamali, 2015; Tong et al., 2015; Yang, 2007; Zhang, 2018; Zheng et al., 2013).

The authors have evaluated culture and organisational culture in different dimensions. For instance, Schein (1985) also examined organisational culture in four dimensions: power culture, role culture, support culture, and successful culture. The study examined organisational culture in four dimensions: "power culture, hierarchy culture, success culture, and support culture". Mamatoğlu developed the questionnaire used in the study (2004; 2006: 181), inspired by the studies of Harrison (1972) and Handy (1985). According to Harrison, culture consists of all ideologies or perceptions and defined his theory as four ideologies, orientations, or perceptions (power, hierarchy, success, and support) (Mamatoğlu, 2004: 306).

2.2. Knowledge Sharing

Briefly reviewing the related literature, knowledge management has problems (security problems, ethics problems, cultural barriers, cost of adopting new technology, knowledge workers problems) (Aras, 2021). The most important of these is perhaps the barriers to knowledge sharing. If knowledge resides in people's minds, data warehouses, files, or computer memories, it does not mean much to the organisation (Goh, 2002: 24). Knowledge workers are the primary sources of knowledge in organisations (Aras, 2021: 60; Jarvenpaa & Staples, 2001: 151; Kharabsheh, 2007: 419). The knowledge needs to be disseminated throughout the organisation. Knowledge sharing is critical to many organisational processes and outcomes, including effectively transferring knowledge between individuals, new product development, organisation survival, and transfer of best practices (Öztürk & Aras, 2021). To manage knowledge effectively in organisations, it is necessary to ensure that knowledge is shared between employees and departments and that individual and department information becomes organisational knowledge (Islam et al., 2011: 5900). Gupta & Govindarajan (2000: 72) stated that "Unless knowledge is pumped efficiently throughout the network, the enterprise will not only pay the price of reinventing the same wheel but will also risk becoming prey to competitors that can replicate its ideas rapidly". Therefore, for today's organisations or knowledge-intensive organisations, information is essential for performance, success, adaptation to the organisation's environment, and survival.

There are several obstacles to knowledge workers not sharing knowledge. The cultural dimensions influence knowledge transfer and management practices (Alavi et al., 2006; Barachini, 2009; Brues, 2003; Mueller, 2012). Bures (2003) states that cultural dimensions barriers to knowledge sharing can be divided into "individual and social barriers". Individual barriers are "loss of power, fear from revelation, uncertainty, the illusion of reward deprivation, single culture elements, the difference between awareness and knowledge, conflict of motives". Social barriers are "language, conflict avoidance, bureaucracy and hierarchy, incoherent paradigms, underestimating lower levels".

Oyemomi et al. (2019) research has shown that organisational culture significantly affects knowledge sharing. Organisational culture is essential in promoting knowledge exchange, learning and creation. Edvinsson & Sullivan (1996: 360) stated that organisational culture is a part of the intangible structural capital that supports knowledge sharing. Lai & Lee's (2007) research has shown that effective cultures positively affect the success of knowledge sharing. To be successful, organisational cultures must be formed to support knowledge sharing. To standardise and maintain knowledge, organisational culture must have communication channels that support knowledge sharing.

2.3. The Mediating Role of Communication and Performance Perception

Chester Barnard (1938) stated that communication is the "heart" of the management process (Rajhans, 20009: 81). There are two internal subsystems in organisations: One consists of the groups and the other consists of individual relationships. Organisational culture operation depends on the interactions of the subsystems within the organisation (Harris & Nelson, 2008: 24, 32). Organisational culture and internal organisational communication are two interrelated concepts. Researchers emphasise that internal organisational communication is very effective in sharing knowledge. Internal communication also has an increasing effect on the motivation of the employees (Rajhans, 2009: 80). Beliefs and practices adopted by employees increase organisational performance, and knowledge exchange among employees (Gochhayat et al., 2017: 3). The presence of communication, knowledge management system and reward system is effective for knowledge sharing (Kathiravelu et al., 2014). Also, sharing of knowledge encourages employees to increase their sustainable performance and dynamic abilities, thus ensuring the sustainability of the organisation (Zou et al., 2020: 1). Organisational performance depends on organisational culture, shared values, and how these values are shared among employees (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Prystupa, 2017: 154). The existence of organisational culture with strong beliefs and values is closely related to the organisation's performance. Organisational culture impacts individual and organisational performance (Maamari & Saheb, 2018). According to Evans & McShane (1988), since performance evaluation is included in the organisational culture, performance evaluation must comply with the organisational culture. Al-Alawi, Marzooqi & Mohammed's (2007) research showed a positive relationship between information systems/technology, communication (interaction between staff), a reward system, and knowledge sharing in organisations. The existence of an incentive and reward system in the organisation also increases the knowledge sharing of the employees (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002; Kathiravelu et al., 2014; Leonard, 1998). In addition, organisational culture, organisational structure, and management affect the performance of knowledge workers (Kulkarni et al., 2006: 318). Harris & Nelson (2008) stated that "Organisational communication is the study of meaningful behaviours within the system and subsystems of the organisational culture". Gochhayat et al. (2017) found that intra-organisational communication has a mediating role in the effect of organisational culture on organisational effectiveness.

Communication within the organisation sheds light on the organisation's future, and its members guide them to achieve goals and motivate them to achieve organisational and individual goals. In addition, it prevents conflicts by increasing cooperation (Gochhayat et al., 2017: 3).

Based on this information, the research hypotheses were established as follows:

H1. Organisational culture affects communication and performance perception positively.

H2. Communication and performance perception affects knowledge sharing positively.

H3. Organisational culture affects knowledge sharing positively.

H4. Communication and performance perception has a mediating role in the effect of organisational culture on knowledge sharing.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Population, Sample, and Data Collection

The universe of the research consists of academicians working at a state university. 1199 academicians work in the university that constitutes the research universe. An online questionnaire was sent to all the academicians, but 377 of them responded. In line with the examinations, it was determined that 15 of the questionnaires were filled in incorrectly or incompletely, and the questionnaire form answered by a total of 362 academicians within the scope of the study was evaluated. 46% of the participants in the study were women, and 115 participants were over 48 years old. The number of male academicians in the sample group is higher than the number of female academics; it is seen that the sample group has a homogeneous structure in terms of demographic characteristics. 82 professors, 94 associate professors and 150 assistant professors participated in the study. 64% of the academicians who answered the questionnaire are faculty members.

3.2. Measurement of Variables

An open-ended and closed-ended 5-question information form was prepared to determine the demographic characteristics of the academicians (gender, age, title, unit of work and duration of work) to be used in the study.

Research data were collected using the knowledge-sharing, communication and performance perception, and organisational culture scales in the 2020-2021 academic year. A questionnaire composed of the organisational culture scale consisting of 16 items, the knowledge sharing scale comprising 18 items, and the communication and performance perception scale containing 12 items. Scale items are evaluated on a 5-point Likert-type scale. In the study, the organisational culture scale (OCS) developed by Mamatoğlu (2004), based on Harrison's four-dimensional organisational culture (hierarchy, success, power support) typology, was used (Mamatoğlu, 2004). A knowledge-sharing scale consisting of 18 items developed by Yeo and Youssef (2010) was used to measure knowledge sharing (Karavardar, 2012: 152; Öztürk & Aras, 2021). The communication and performance perception scale was developed by Mamatoğlu (2006).

This study aims to exhibit the mediating role of communication and performance perception on the effect of organisational culture on knowledge sharing. In line with this purpose, first, the impact of the organisational culture on knowledge sharing will be determined. After this step, the mediating effect of the concept will be tested by including communication and performance perception in the research model.

In line with these results, the research model was created in Figure 1.

Figure: 1
Research Model
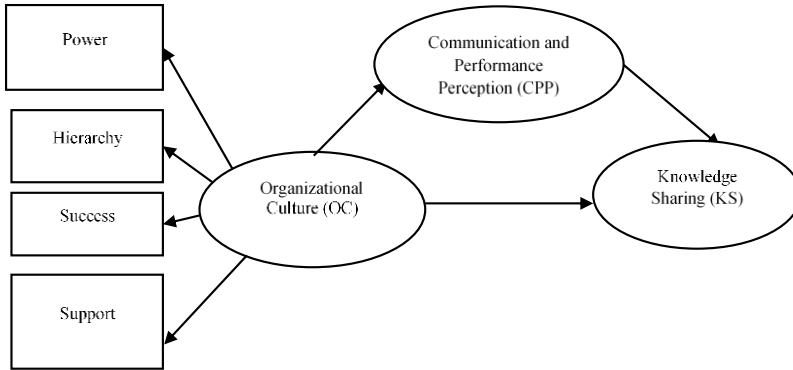
3.3. Results

To test the reliability level of the scales used in the research, the "Cronbach's Alpha" coefficients were calculated, and the findings are summarised in Table 1.

Table: 1
Internal Consistency Coefficients of The Scales Used in The Study

Scales	α
OC	0.77
Power	0.72
Hierarchy	0.73
Success	0.80
Support	0.78
KS	0.80
CPP	0.77

The relationship between organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and communication and performance perception scales was calculated using the Spearman correlation coefficient to determine the direction and severity of the relations between variables. The obtained results are presented in Table 2.

Table: 2
Correlation Analysis Results

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Power	-					
2.Hierarchy	.649*	-				
3.Success	.390*	.533*	-			
4.Support	.329	.421*	.058	-		
5.Knowledge Sharing	.622*	.335*	.434*	.651*	-	
6. Communication and Performance Perception	.509*	.337*	.567*	.446*	.542*	-
* p<0.01						

As seen in the correlation matrix in Table 2; It is seen that there is a positive, statistically significant, and moderate relationship between the organisational culture sub-dimensions; hierarchy and support (r=0.421, p<0.01), power and hierarchy (r=0.649, p<0.01), power and success (r=0.390, p<0.01), hierarchy and success (r=0.533, p<0.01).

It is seen that there is a positive, statistically significant, and moderate relationship between a knowledge sharing and the sub-dimensions of organisational culture, power (r=0.622, p<0.01), hierarchy (r=0.335, p<0.01), success (r=0.434, p<0.01) and support (r=0.651, p<0.01), communication and performance perception and the sub-dimensions of organisational culture, power (r=0.509, p<0.01), hierarchy (r=0.337, p<0.01), success (r=0.567, p<0.01) and support (r=0.446, p<0.01), communication and performance perception and knowledge sharing (r=0.542, p<0.01).

Examination of these causal relationships after determining the relationships between the variables. The research model was created to test the research hypotheses and evaluate the mediating effect of communication and performance perception, tested with the structural equation model. First, the factor structure was examined with data showing the goodness of fit in CFA goodness of fit tests. According to the model goodness of fit values, RMSEA, NFI and TLI values were within acceptable limits. AGFI, GFI, and CFI values are also in good agreement. In the light of these data, it can be said that the model is compatible with the data.

The structural equation model developed for the research is summarised in Figure 2. The structural equation model for the relationships between organisational culture, communication performance perception, and knowledge sharing for this model is summarised in Table 3.

Figure: 2
Structural Equation Model
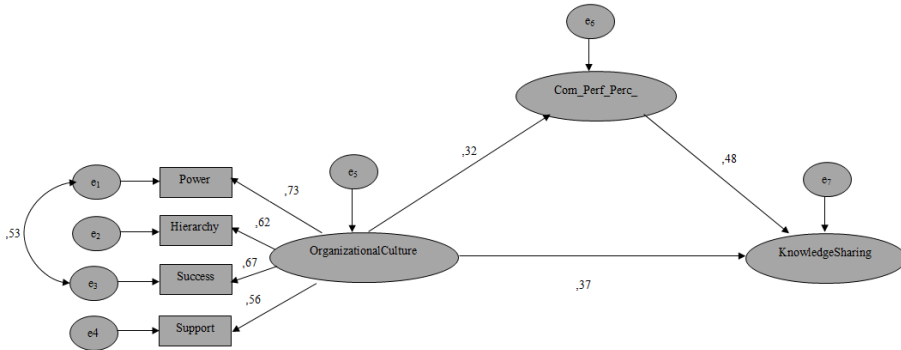
Table: 3
Structural Equation Model for The Relationships Between Organisational Culture, Communication Performance Perception and Knowledge Sharing

Hypotheses	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	S.E.	t
H_1: OC → CPP	.32	.32	.0	.07	3.39***
H_2: CPP → KS	.48	.48	.0	.06	4.41***
H_3: OC → KS	.60	.37	.23	.07	5.26***
***p<.001					

The developed structural equation model results showed that organisational culture predicts the perception of communication and performance (β=.32, t=3.39 p <.001). Therefore, the H_1 hypothesis was accepted. At the same time, communication and performance perception also predict knowledge sharing (β=.48, t=4.41 p <.001). The H_2 hypothesis was accepted. Also, organisational culture predicts knowledge sharing (β=.37, t=5.26 p <.001). The H_3 hypothesis was accepted. And finally, it has been observed that organisational culture has an indirect effect (β=.23, t=5.26 p <.001) on communication and performance perception through knowledge sharing. Therefore, the H_4 hypothesis was accepted. In addition, based on the results of Bootstrap analysis, it is seen that communication and performance perception play a partial mediator role in the relationship between organisational culture and knowledge sharing (95% CI [.07, .21]).

4. Conclusion

Most of the studies in knowledge management emphasise the importance of knowledge sharing. One of the problems faced by knowledge management in organisations is knowledge sharing. Since people are the source of knowledge sharing, things that affect people behaviourally are also effective in knowledge sharing. Therefore, organisational behaviour literature also explores the factors affecting knowledge sharing. Undoubtedly, organisational culture is among the factors that affect human behaviour in the organisation. However, numerous studies examine the relationship between organisational culture and

knowledge sharing. Communication is another factor that affects both employee performance and knowledge-sharing behaviour. Studies examine the relationship between communication and performance perceptions, organisational culture and knowledge sharing, but its mediating role has not been discussed before. This study examines the predictive relationships between organisational culture, knowledge sharing and communication and performance perception and the mediating role of communication and performance perception in the relationship between organisational culture and knowledge sharing. In this sense, the study aimed to contribute to knowledge management literature and management literature.

The correlation analyses showing the relationships between the sub-dimensions of organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and communication-performance perception scales revealed a positive and significant relationship between organisational culture and knowledge sharing and communication and performance perception. These results are consistent with most of the findings in the literature.

Structural equation model results, in which the predictive relationships between organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and communication-performance perception are examined, show that organisational culture positively predicts knowledge sharing and communication-performance perception.

In addition, it has been determined that organisational culture indirectly affects knowledge sharing through communication-performance perception. In other words, it was concluded that the communication-performance perception variable is a mediating variable in the relationship between organisational culture and knowledge sharing.

It has been concluded that the positive perception of the employee regarding intra-organisational communication positively affects the perceptions of support, hierarchy, and successful culture. In addition, it has been concluded that the positive perception of the employee about the performance evaluation system has a positive effect on the perception of hierarchy culture and negatively affects the perception of power culture (Mamatoğlu, 2006: 197).

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