

Applicability of Z Theory in Turkish Public Administration

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Citation Taner, D. (2026). Applicability of Z theory in Turkish public administration. *İnönü University International Journal of Social Sciences* 15, 010, 01–18. DOI: 10.54282/inijoss.1757221

doi 10.54282/inijoss.1757221

Submission Date: August 2, 2025 / **Acceptance Date:** July 13, 2026 / **Published Date:** July 16, 2026

Abstract

With all the economic, political and cultural changes in the world, the world is evolving into a different area. This process of change is called globalization and is on the agenda of all countries of the world. Today, organizations must adapt their activities to globalization. Management is an important organizational activity. Not all management is successful. The success of management is related to activities such as doing the right things, making effective decisions, and taking into account the cultural characteristics of managers and those being managed. The cultural qualities of the managers and the managed are the values, beliefs they have, and these values and beliefs are referred to as organizational culture, and organizational culture is the dominant element that shapes the management style of organizations.

The management and organizational culture characteristics of Theory Z focus on people; long-term employment, a slow promotion system, a career system not based on expertise, informal control mechanisms, participatory decision-making, and viewing employees as a whole. The study primarily focused on successful management and conducted a comprehensive literature review on the importance of management and organizational culture. The main problem sought to be answered in the study: The existence and applicability of the management and organizational culture characteristics of Theory Z, which is seen as a successful management practice, in Turkish public administration. In this regard, the study aims to fill a gap in the literature by conducting an extensive literature review.

Keywords: Management, Z Theory, Turkish Public Administration, Long-Term Employment, A Holistic Approach to Humanity

Introduction

Management and organizational culture are of great importance for the success of organizations. The main factor affecting the formation of management and organizational culture in Theory Z is humanism. Humanism is the main element at the core of Theory Z. In connection with the fact that all organizations are not the same, management and organizational cultures are also different. Theory Z attracts attention especially after the Second World War as a theory whose culture sets an example for all organizations. It is argued by many management scientists that the cultural values of Theory Z will give positive results for organizations when they are applied correctly in organizations. The main purpose of the Theory Z management system; is to eliminate the walls between employees, management and the organization, to increase the commitment of employees to the organization, to create a family structure in the organization, to enable employees to participate in the management process, to provide long-term promotion and career opportunities and to increase the duration of employee commitment to the organization (Kaya, 2024, p.5).

While the process of change in the social, economic, political and cultural fields in the world affects all organizations, the need for restructuring in public organizations is also revealed in this direction. Especially since the 1980s, public organizations have had to change and develop themselves, and the applicability of Theory Z, which is a successful management practice in the field of public administration, is discussed. The existence of humanism-based management and organizational culture is actually a necessity for success in public administration. This is because a culture that prioritizes people is vital for effective and efficient management.

As it is known, management is a system and it has an environment. For this reason, management has an impact on organizational culture as well as organizational culture has an impact on the management process. This is because culture is one of the most important internal and external environmental factors surrounding both management and the organization (Turan, 2011, p.169). In this direction, in the first part of the study, which consists of five chapters, a brief introduction to the subject is made and in the second part of the study, detailed information is given on this subject due to the importance of management and organizational culture in terms of organizational effectiveness. In this section, management and organizational culture are examined conceptually and then the culture of Turkish public administration is evaluated from past to present. The third section describes the purpose, formation process and assumptions of Theory Z, which was developed by the Japanese economist William Ouchi and whose focus is on people. Then, the criticisms made in order to question the characteristics of the organizational management system shaped by Theory Z are expressed. The reason for the inclusion of these criticisms in the subject is that a criticism of a subject is essentially a concrete piece of writing intended to support the development of that subject. Therefore, this part of the study is of great importance for the relevant part of the study. In the fourth section, a theoretical comparison is made between the management organizational culture shaped by Theory Z, which is seen as an important management theory despite some disadvantages, and the Turkish public management organizational culture. In this section, the applicability of Theory Z, which brings a different perspective to the world of management where people are at the forefront, is presented in detail. Then, an evaluation of the study is made under the title of conclusion. In this sense, the study is based on a broad literature review. Preliminary literature review revealed a significant research gap in the literature. In this regard, while numerous studies exist on Turkish Public Administration, Theory Z, and Organizational Culture, three important studies stand out that are comparable (similar) to the study titled 'Applicability of Theory Z in the Field of Management: The Case of Turkish Public Administration'. In the 2007 work titled 'Z Theory and Its Evaluation in Terms of Applicability to School Administration' (Beycioğlu, 2007), authored by Kadir Beycioğlu, the potential applicability of Z Theory in Turkish schools is discussed, and a number of recommendations are made. As is well known, education is among the state's

primary responsibilities, and public schools are public institutions. For this reason, the study shares similarities with the research topic. The study states that the core principles of Theory Z long-term employment, participatory decision-making, and trust-based management can enhance school performance. In the work titled 'The Influence of Our Cultural Characteristics on Turkish Management Values and a Comparison with the Japanese Z Theory' (Şahin, 2005), written by Ali Şahin in 2005, while comparing the Turkish management style with the Japanese management style, the applicability of Z Theory which has found successful application in Japanese management to all cultural structures is discussed. The study reveals that classical and hierarchical factors play a significant role in the field of Turkish public administration, and cultural fit is also of great importance in terms of managerial success. Furthermore, in a 1983 study authored by George W. England (England, 1983) and titled 'Japanese and American Management: Theory Z and Beyond' research comparing Japanese and American managers, employees, and societies is examined. The study argues that it is unlikely for Z Theory to become a widely accepted norm in American organizations to the same extent as it has in Japan. The main point of this study, authored by George W. England, is that Z Theory is not a universally accepted norm by all organizations, and therefore organizational culture is a significant criterion in this regard. In addition to previous studies, this work is expected to shed light on future practices in the field of Turkish public administration from the perspective of management and personnel. In this sense, it is considered a necessary study.

1. Conceptual Framework Related to Management and Organizational Culture

Management encompasses all activities that involve ensuring cooperation and directing people toward a goal (Yenisu et al., 2019, p.515). As a social discipline, the concept of management is subject to constant change (Drucker, 2007, p.4). The development of the concept of management is analyzed as the pre-scientific management period, the classical period, the neoclassical period, the modern period, (Yenisu et al., 2019, p.516) the post-1980 period. The classical management approach led by Taylor, Fayol and Weber accepts management as a rational, rational system with an economic and technical perspective. While the neoclassical understanding of management is based on Hawthorne experiments, it is sufficient to explain the human factor, that is, the natural system, which is neglected by the classics. Modern management understanding is a management understanding that tries to provide a combination of rational system and natural system (Yenisu et al., 2019, pp.526,527). In the last quarter of the 20th century, as globalization started to make its impact felt, the borders of nations lost their meaning and competition became international, and even the developments in communication and information technology and social differences in which the human element is at the forefront have led to the emergence of different management practices and new ideas in this period, and new ideas covering the forms, perspectives and techniques of post-modern management approaches have emerged (Seçtim & Erkul, 2020, p.31).

1.1. Management and Organizational Culture in General

Hofstede defines culture as the programming of people within an environment (Hofstede, 1980, p.43). Culture is a phenomenon shared by members of a society. It is a concept that people learn through their own experiences while living in society; therefore, it is neither instinctive nor hereditary. Culture is social and enduring. Hofstede's cultural dimensions include power distance, individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity/femininity (Aydın & Uçman, 2019, p.148). All values emphasized in societies are an important part of culture. In this respect, some cultures emphasize competition, some emphasize brotherhood, some emphasize cooperation and some emphasize personal performance. The rules and norms formed in societies are shaped by culture. In short, many social and organizational behaviors adopted by societies are a part of culture (Durmuş, 2023, p.88).

Organizational culture refers to the set of shared values and norms that exist within an organization and are taught to newcomers (Vechio, 1988, p.542). Organizational culture is, in essence, the glue that holds organizational members together. The tools used to teach organizational culture to employees or in other words, organizational symbols are referred to as elements of organizational culture. The elements of organizational culture include: the common language spoken by organizational members; stories told within the organization and known by everyone; heroes and leaders who hold an important place in the organization's history; established and accepted ceremonies and meetings, physical symbols and emblems used by organizational members that carry significant meanings, widely accepted practices unique to the organization, slogans, the cultural fabric and network within the organization, and most importantly, the unique value system that varies from organization to organization (Kılıç, 2015, pp.59,60).

Management cannot be separated from culture and the success of management depends not only on scientific data but also on the suitability of the cultural qualities of both those who manage and those who are managed. In order to determine the personal and organizational goals within the organization more effectively and efficiently, managers have to examine the cultural values of the individual, the general culture of the society and the culture of the managed organization in the best way and adopt a management style in that direction (Firat, 2012, p.9). Management culture, which can be expressed as all acceptable and legitimate behaviors within the organization (Jamil et al., 2013, pp.900,901), is understood as the summary of beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors reflected in the decisions and actions of managers working in organizations in line with the goal of ensuring organizational development. In the discipline of public administration, the concept of management culture is expressed as values, norms and attitudes that are regulated by the environment and bureaucrats and manifest themselves in interpersonal relations within the organization. The traditional understanding of public administration, which has been effective in the field of public administration for a long period of time, expresses the role of the state in society with centralized, restrictive, and hierarchical structure-based findings (Özmen, 2013, pp.926,930). Since the 1980s, the new understanding of public administration has been on the world agenda and the current situation has shown that a healthy public administration system is based on democracy, human rights and the rule of law (Keleş, 2024, p.1). In this period, the understanding of public administration has shifted from statist, bureaucratic, coercive, uniform, centralized and hierarchical to flexible, open, market-based, less bureaucratic, accountable, decentralized, entrepreneurial and innovative (Yay & Aktel, 2015, p.2). Therefore, a new public administration culture has emerged in the world with the new public administration approach. In particular, it has influenced the public administrations and public administration cultures of all countries of the world. As is well known, globalization, which accelerated after the 1980s, transformed the traditional bureaucratic structure in the field of public administration and fostered a model based on effectiveness and efficiency. In this context, a new approach to public administration characterized by performance measurement, strategic planning, and citizen-centered systems has come to the fore. With the onset of the technological revolution in the 1990s, the scope of global influence expanded significantly.

In the late twentieth century, public administration has been one of the most emphasized subjects within the framework of the impact of global changes, because the changing conditions and needs and new functions have radically transformed public administration. Management culture, which is defined as the system of values, beliefs, expectations and behaviors reflected in the decisions and actions of managers on the management styles applied in the organization, has also been subjected to transformation in this sense (Özmen, 2013, p.943). This process, which

has widespread effects, has also significantly affected the Turkish public administration.

1.2. Turkish Public Administration Culture in General

In general, within Turkish society, factors such as fairness, a fatherly demeanor, openness to communication, professional competence, integrity, authoritarianism, and leadership are influential when it comes to managerial qualities. However, when examining managers' decision-making processes, it is evident that interests, the social environment, traditions, customs, and money play a significant role. In terms of organizational qualities, communication, hierarchy, flexible rules, uncertainty, and the reward-punishment system are influential. Regarding career advancement factors, career planning and structured work practices influence professional life. In terms of family characteristics: the family structure is strong, there is a sense of being unable to do the work one loves, and written rules exist. From a socio-environmental perspective, materialism takes precedence, and it is believed that privileges should be granted to those holding status. Competition is at the forefront in interpersonal relationships. From a cultural perspective, values, traditions, and customs are influential. According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Turkish society exhibits a high power distance, displays a collectivist structure due to its adherence to traditions and customs and possesses a feminine structure on the masculinity/femininity dimension. Furthermore, according to Hofstede's study conducted across 50 countries, Turkey is a country characterized by a strong cultural tendency to avoid uncertainty. Turkish culture exhibits a more risk-averse structure. In Turkey, there is a strong emphasis on laws and regulations (Aydın & Uçman, 2019, pp. 135,149).

The discipline consisting of practice and theory to understand and improve the public bureaucracy and its relations with the people to whom it provides goods and services is called public administration (Eryılmaz, 2000, pp.8,9). Within the framework of this definition, it can be predicted what kind of culture public administration has and how it will be shaped (Turan, 2011, p.60). Although the history of public administration in Turkey goes back a long way, Turkish public administration can essentially be characterized by the traditional public administration approach and the new public administration approach. The essence of the traditional public administration approach is to organize according to the bureaucracy model. The approach is based on detailed rules, strict hierarchy and formalism, impersonal, career-based, and highly centralized (Şahin, 2011, pp.13,14). In the management culture created by traditional public administration, qualities such as focusing on processes, not acting outside the legislation, being dependent on the hierarchical superior, being based on written documents, being closed to innovations, and hesitating to take both initiative and responsibility come to the fore (İskender & Aşgın, 2020, p.171).

In the post-1980 period, great changes have been experienced throughout the world with the impact of globalization. In this sense, Turkey has also started to experience changes in the field of public administration after the 1980s. As a matter of fact, in parallel with the rest of the world, significant reforms have been realized in public administration in Turkey, indicating the transition from the traditional public administration approach to the new public administration approach. The new public administration approach focuses on economy, efficiency, effectiveness, productivity. And advocates the need to use private sector methods in public administration. Today, public administrations are moving in the direction of participatory, entrepreneurial, citizen-based, citizen-led, citizen-controlled bureaucracy with the new management culture emerging from the new public administration paradigm. The new public administration paradigm, which organizes the relations of public administration with both society and citizens with a new perspective, leads to the emergence of a new management culture. The main factors of the new management culture are participation, citizen orientation, change in organizational structure, openness, transparency, accountability, decentralization, different service delivery techniques and strategic

management (İskender & Aşgın, 2020, p.171). The restructuring of the Turkish public administration has gained great momentum after the 2000s and continues to develop today.

Culture is the most important element that expresses the continuity of societies and their difference from other societies. Turkish management culture is a cultural system with a unique structure formed in the historical process and today's conditions (Çağlar, 2001, p.144). Although contemporary Turkey, with its secular structure, modernization process, and competitive economy, exhibits characteristics similar to Western values (Dağlı, 2020, pp.208,209), there are also general management assumptions specific to Turkish management culture. These management assumptions can be generally expressed as follows: high uncertainty avoidance due to high causality tendency, high organizational power distance, high tendency of individuals to prevent all conflicts and disagreements that may arise, high resistance to change. In addition to society exhibiting sometimes modern and sometimes traditional thoughts and behaviors, its habits and value systems differ from Western management. Another point that does not fully align with the expectations of Western societies is that managers have different expectations of their employees, and employees have different expectations of their managers (Yılmaz et al., 2023, p.384; Öztürk & Altundağ, 2023, p.81). Turkish public administration culture possesses a strong accumulation of knowledge, whether conceptual or practical. Considering the unique dynamics of Turkish public administration, it appears that authoritarian tendencies predominate, authority is not delegated unless absolutely necessary, a rigid hierarchical approach prevails, and the managerial culture possessed by managers is much more influential in shaping behaviors accordingly (Dağlı, 2020, pp.205,209).

2. Conceptual Framework for Theory Z

Although the principles that organizations consider and shape their management within the scope of management compliance are universal, these principles do not show the same successful results in all societies. This is because the values of the societies where universally accepted management principles are applied are different from each other. While Theory Z can be applied successfully in one society, success can be achieved in another society only by taking into account the characteristics of that society. Effective management requires a good understanding of human psychology and human behavior and their underlying factors. In order to effectively achieve these desired goals, an understanding of how to direct and motivate staff is required (Goyal, 2018, p.2). This understanding is actually present in Theory Z. For this reason, Theory Z is discussed in detail in this section of the study. Theory Z is essentially one of the Japanese organizational management approaches and the theory started when the Japanese, who were defeated in the Second World War, realized that they had to fight Western competition in order to survive (Davutoğlu et al., 2017, p.18). Below, the historical process and the main elements of the conceptual framework of Theory Z are examined.

2.1. Theory Z in General

Douglas McGregor was one of the first management science writers to examine the effects of managerial practices on employee behavior at a time when managers were not yet aware of many of the issues. These investigations were largely carried out between the mid-1930s and the mid-1950s. This period is known as the Second World War and the Great Depression (Tekin et al., 2016, p.82). After this period, the deficiencies of classical management theory were seen and neoclassical management understanding emerged in order to eliminate these deficiencies. Theories X and Y (Esen & Saraman, 2018, p.247), which are among the theories of the neoclassical management approach, are among the most striking studies by McGregor. The time when X and Y theories were developed coincides with two different periods in terms of the history of management approaches. While Theory

X developed during the classical management approach period, it summarizes the perspective of the management approach to employees in this period. The period in which theory Y emerged is the period when the neoclassical management approach began to develop. This theory is almost the opposite of theory X in terms of content. For this reason, it can be said that Theory Y summarizes the neoclassical management approach's perspective on working personnel to a significant extent (Tekin et al., 2016, pp.82,83). The assumptions that constitute Theory X (Koçel, 2014, p.683; Altundağ, 2019, p.17; Ramasamy, 2009, p.221; Simionel, 2011, p.232; Thomas, 2004, p.65);

-The average person dislikes work and tries to avoid it as much as possible.

-The average person is selfish. He/She prefers his/her own wants and goals to organizational goals and is more interested in economic motives.

-The average person is not open to change because of his/her nature. They lack practical intelligence and are easy to deceive. Because of these qualities, individuals should be forced to work. They should be closely supervised and punished in order to realize their goals.

The assumptions that constitute Theory Y (Küçüközkan, 2015, p.89);

-For the average person, work is as natural as play and rest.

-The average person is not lazy by nature; he/she becomes this way through experience.

-The average person works with self-control in line with his/her stated goal.

-All human beings have potential. Under favorable conditions a person develops them. And they learn to assume more responsibility. Therefore, what needs to be done by the manager is to provide a suitable environment for the staff to develop themselves.

As a result of the shortcomings of these theories, Theory Z, which is the main subject of this study, has emerged. Ouchi argues that Theory Z has been successful in Japanese organizations, but also states that it will be successful in Western organizations (Intensescholar, 2024, p.2).

2.2.The Expected Results of the Z Theory

In addition to establishing the theoretical framework in a research, it is also very important to determine the expected results about the subject (Baloğlu, 2005, p.125). In this sense, with the help of a table, the expected results of the Z Theory are expressed as follows;

Table 1. The Expected Results of the Z Theory

About Employees	About Organizational Culture
-The ability of staff to establish both cooperative and close working relationships with their colleagues -Employees expect both reciprocity and support from the organization -People want to be able to balance work and life. And valuing a working environment where family, culture and traditions are as important as work	-Decrease in employee turnover rates -Increased employee commitment to work -Significant increases in productivity -Decrease in absenteeism rate -High efficiency -More quality products -Strong labor force -Better overall financial performance

Source. Goyal, 2018, pp.4,5

As can be seen, these expected results on which Theory Z is based essentially constitute the foundation of Theory Z.

2.3.Organizational Management Culture Characteristics Shaped by Theory Z

The Z Theory put forward by William Ouchi states the existence of three types of organizations. These organizations are named by William Ouchi as A (traditional American organizations), J (Japanese organizations) and Z (American organizations applying Japanese organizational and management philosophy). It is a fact that organizations with a Z-type management system are actually a kind of American adaptation of Japanese organizations (Hürriyet, 2022, p.3). While American society is described as a Western society, it has been the leader of Western societies since World War II. Japanese society, on the other hand, is an Asian society. There are significant cultural differences between American and Japanese societies. While American culture is modern, rational, and individualistic, in Japanese society, group loyalty and commitment are more important than personal interests. In Japanese society, group success and solidarity are far more important than the individual (Kabaş, 2020, p.3). The Z Theory emerges from the combination of management philosophies in Japanese and American societies. The Z Theory aims to create a significant model that brings together the positive aspects of the management philosophies of both societies. Theory Z includes a program that covers all aspects of employee life such as long-term employment, slow appraisal and promotion system, a career system that is not based on expertise, an implicit supervision mechanism and an explicit control mechanism, participatory decision-making and individual responsibility (Pehlivan & Özdaşlı, 2024, pp.1460,1462). However, in real terms, these qualities that type Z organizations possess have no meaning on their own. What is important is that these qualities together can create a culture of the organization. The most important difference of this type of organization from other organizations is that having such a developed organizational culture, the organization is not only an economic union but also a social union. The successful functioning of Type Z organizations is very much related to the happiness and motivation of employees and their emotional attachment to their organizations (Öner, 1989, p.36). Finally, it should be stated that although it is not very easy to create a type Z management style and organization, there are some points to be considered by organizations in order to create an organization with these qualities. These points are as follows (Demirkan, 1996, pp.10,11);

- Managers must understand the Type Z organization and individual roles very well.
- Periodic audits of this philosophy of the organization should be carried out.
- The desired philosophy must be clearly articulated.
- The desired philosophy should be implemented by creating both appropriate structure and incentives.
- Staff should be encouraged to develop their personal skills.
- Ensure continuity in the workforce
- The timeframe for evaluating the success of the staff should not be too long (the principle that no staff member can be 100% successful should be adopted).
- Encourage professional development of staff in a wide range of areas rather than specialization in a particular subject)
- Managers should select appropriate areas for staff engagement
- Managers should be interested not only in the lives of their employees at work but also in their entire lives as a whole.

In the field of public administration, rewards and incentive systems may take the form of monetary compensation, but they can also include recognition, appreciation, leave, or career-related rewards or incentives. These practices aim to increase the productivity of staff members. The main conclusion to be drawn from the Z Theory is that the

important elements in terms of productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, effectiveness and performance increase in organizations, whether private or public organizations, manifest themselves in the point of trust in organizations and the participation of employees in organizational activities (Şahin, 2005, p.182).

2.4.Criticisms of Theory Z

While Theory Z has many remarkable features and principles, it is also vital to critically analyze it from a managerial perspective. Just as no theory is perfect, Theory Z is not perfect. Like others, it has been subjected to criticism in many areas. These criticisms are briefly as follows (Goyal, 2018, p.7);

- Being a much less motivating theory for employees with higher requirements
- Some employees may be fully satisfied with the idea of job security, but hesitate to take responsibility. This may cause lethargy among the staff
- It can be difficult for employees to participate in the workforce. The reason for this is that employees may prevent their participation in decisions due to fear of criticism.
- Lack of authority of senior employees
- The theory suggests organizing without any structure, which can lead to chaos
- The difficulty of creating a common culture
- Since the theory is based on Japanese management practices, it is thought that the theory cannot be applied in different cultures

However, although Theory Z has its shortcomings, it is still considered to be an effective theory that helps shape the world of work (Intensescholar, 2024, p.5).

3.A Theoretical Comparison between the Organizational Management Culture Formed by Theory Z and Turkish Public Management Culture

The activities carried out in the field of management culture in successful organizations can be used to solve problems in similar areas. As it is known, Japanese management culture is attributed to be successful and Theory Z is a theory based on the Japanese management system. Below, the characteristics of a management that applies Theory Z are expressed with the help of a table.

Table 2. Characteristics of a Management Applying Theory Z

Long-term employment
Slow appraisal and promotion system
Career system not based on expertise
An informal oversight mechanism
Participatory decision making
Considering employees as a whole

Source. Daft, 1991, p.52; Ouchi, 1989, pp.8,49

In order to see whether the applicability of Theory Z is possible for Turkish public administration, the characteristics of Turkish public administration and the characteristics of the Japanese management system-based Theory Z have been expressed in the previous sections of the study. In this part of the study, the existence and

applicability of Theory Z in Turkish public administration is discussed.

William Ouchi states that Theory Z has been successful in Japanese organizations and argues that the management style based on Theory Z will also be successful in Western organizations (Intensescholar, 2024, p.2). However, as stated in the study, in reality, these qualities that type Z organizations possess have no meaning on their own. What is important is that these qualities together allow for the formation of a highly developed and rich fabric within the organization and the creation of an organizational culture. The most important difference of this type of organizations from other organizations is that having this type of organizational culture creates not only an economic unity but also a social unity in the organization (Öner, 1989, p.36). Below, the Japanese management model, Theory Z, is compared with the Turkish public administration structure on the basis of its main features.

3.1. In Terms of Long-Term Employment

Long-term employment means that employees stay in the same organization from the beginning of their employment until they retire (Trevor, 1983, p.37). The most important feature of Theory Z is long-term employment. Long-term employment leads to the integration of work and life. While the personnel working in these organizations do not constantly change workplaces, they enter an organization and aim to receive the bonuses they will deserve by working in this workplace in a stable manner (Eren, 2009, p.97). Bonuses are a form of reciprocal relationship involving significant legal scrutiny and intermediaries. The most important function of bonuses is seen as contributing to the recipient's status. In this way, they lead to increased job satisfaction and a decrease in turnover (Ceylan, 1998:126). Theory Z essentially advocates a significant commitment to stable and long-term employment (Ouchi & Price, 1978, p.39).

Since the relationship between the employees and the organization is not based on a contract but on commitment, the employees do not go to other organizations that offer better economic opportunities and layoffs are avoided regardless of the conditions (Öner, 1989, p.34). Therefore, while employees do not want to work in a different organization, organizations do not want to dismiss their employees. In addition, the idea of long-term employment helps the organization to become a community with some benefits such as seniority-based payment, access to the organization's housing and recreational facilities (Davutoğlu et al., 2017, p.20).

However, despite everything, it may not be easy for organizations and employees to make long-term employment commitments (Lumen, 2025, p.3). In the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey, the personnel working in the field of public administration did not have the concerns of today's employees because the phenomenon called globalization was not as intense and rapid as it is today. In this direction, public administration was able to provide job security in return for the efforts of the personnel and their loyalty to the organization. At that time, employees, employers and managers, in other words, the parties knew what they expected from each other. This situation was not put on paper, not signed, but it was a solid agreement for all parties. However, nowadays, with globalization all over the world, organizations have started to think about more competition and efficiency (Ay, 1996, pp.161,162) and the fear of losing their jobs is a primary problem for the employees and the chances of long-term employment are decreasing in line with this change and transformation in the world and in Turkey in particular. However, despite this decline, the personnel working as civil servants in the Turkish public administration are still under the security of an employment contract that continues until retirement. In terms of long-term employment, the situation in the Turkish public administration saves organizational managers from having to deal with the job security problems of the personnel (Beycioğlu, 2007, p.68).

As can be seen, there are traces of Theory Z in Turkish public administration organizational structures in terms of long-term employment (Şafak, 2023, p.5). In addition, according to the Law No. 657 regulating civil service in

Turkey, the essence of the civil service system is based on classification, career and merit. In this case, it is based on ensuring the lifelong employment of employees in an organization (Yılmaz et al., 2023, pp.385,386).

3.2.In Terms of Slow Appraisal and Promotion System

The slow appraisal and promotion system is an important feature of the Japanese management style. The slow appraisal and promotion system is defined as the fact that no matter how much knowledge, intelligence and talent a person has after entering the job, for example, after eight years or ten years, he can be formally evaluated and promoted if his situation is appropriate (Eren, 2009, p.98). The evaluation of the personnel working in an organization where Theory Z is applied is not based on precise performance criteria. Since these individuals have been working together for a long time, they can get to know each other personally and the evaluation process is first carried out intuitively based on individual characteristics. Since a long period is required for evaluation, promotion processes are also quite slow (Öner, 1989, p.35). In the Z Theory, a person's place in the organization, his/her rights and the measure of his/her behavior are related to his/her working time in the organization (Şahin, 2005, p.184). Although this valuation method is quite heavy for managers, it encourages positive behaviors in terms of cooperation, efficiency and evaluation (Davutoğlu et al., 2017, p.21).

In Turkish management culture, it is known that seniority and experience are important factors in the promotion and evaluation of employees. As a matter of fact, in Kutadgu Biliğ, it is stated that the servant should first be cooked and tried in service, and then he should raise himself (Yılmaz et al., 2023, pp.385,386). However, the slow evaluation and promotion system envisaged by Theory Z is not seen much in Turkish public administration. This actually eliminates the chance for the personnel to gain experience in this way (Beycioğlu, 2007, p.68). In Turkish public administration, if an employee has sufficient knowledge, he or she can be promoted without a long period of time.

3.3.In Terms of Career System Not Based on Specialization

In the career system that is not based on specialization within the Z Theory, the goal is that when the employee reaches the peak of his/her profession, he/she has professional knowledge and skills in all business lines of the organization (Şimşek, 1998, pp.103,104). In an organization where Z Theory is applied, the personnel working in an organization are provided to work in different jobs and units within the organization instead of specializing in a narrow field. In this way, the specialization of the personnel is not profession-based but organization-based. In other words, the knowledge and skills developed by the employees are only valuable and useful in their own organizations. The expertise of these individuals will not be useful in another organization, and an individual from another organization is not expected to adapt and work with his/her job in a short time (Keys & Miller, 1984, p.346). In fact, while the horizontal and vertical rotation system is applied with the Z Theory, there are also applications of rotation between technical departments more than this rotation, and there is also the use of specialization applications and promotion system in the medium term (Eren, 2012, p.159). As can be seen, Theory Z recommends career steps that come in the medium term, and this is expressed as a vital, productive and job-satisfying condition. The reason for this is that the personnel working in this way are open to new experiences, gain experience on different subjects and see the group phenomenon.

In the field of Turkish public administration, in general terms, there is no effort to provide professional knowledge and skills to the personnel in other business lines of the organization in which they work when they reach the peak of their profession. In terms of Turkish public administration; it is thought that the possible negative effects of the lack of career steps in the medium term can be eliminated by directing civil servants to managerial

services to the extent permitted by law, ensuring the participation of civil servants in different in-service training courses and participating in activities such as study visits within the framework of today's European Union programs. In addition, career step system applications for education employees, which have recently come to the agenda, are also considered as an application that can contribute to Turkish public administration in this process (Beycioğlu, 2007, p.68).

3.4.In Terms of Informal Audit Mechanism

In organizations where Theory Z is applied, both open control mechanism and closed control mechanism are used in a balanced way (Öner, 1989, p.35). In such organizations, the open control mechanism is applied in the form of a control system that does not show formal features by creating open offices (Eren, 2012, p.159). In fact, since the collective responsibility and collective decision-making qualities of Theory Z create a group spirit and emphasize the sense of “we”, all employees control each other automatically (Şahin, 2005, p.184).

In the field of Turkish public administration, there is an audit mechanism with written, explicit, formal criteria that is under constant supervision. Implicit supervision can improve mutual understanding among civil servants in public organizations, and the use of this mechanism can free civil servants from distant and shallow stances within the organization and enable them to perceive themselves in a more professional manner. The existence of a centralized supervision system in Turkish public administration eliminates the applicability of this aspect of Theory Z to a significant extent (Beycioğlu, 2007, p.69). In Turkey, the areas of authority and responsibility of managers are defined by law and the limits of their supervisory authority are drawn. It is determined who, which organization, how, when and in what way managers will supervise (Şahin, 2005, p.184).

3.5.In Terms of Participatory Decision Making

One of the most well-known characteristics of Theory Z is the realization and implementation of the importance of group decision-making. This actually means the adoption of participatory decision-making (Davutoğlu et al., 2017, p.22). Japanese managers mostly apply soft and indirect management styles rather than coercive and harsh behaviors. This situation creates harmonious relations between superiors and subordinates and enables the employees to easily adopt the organizational goals (Kozlu, 2014, p.71). One of the most prominent and successful applications of Theory Z is the unanimous decision-making. Another characteristic of the decision-making function of Theory Z is that this process is operated from the bottom up (Şahin, 2005, p.183). Here, responsibility is given to individuals. In fact, responsibility does not mean collective responsibility but individual responsibility (Öner, 1989, p.35). According to Theory Z, even if decisions are taken jointly, employees are expected to take responsibility for their own actions. An employee does not expect other employees to take responsibility for their own mistakes. In Turkish public administration, employees take responsibility for their own behavior. The whole organization is not responsible for the failures caused by one employee (Beycioğlu, 2007, p.69). However, it should be noted that participatory decision-making can always be implemented due to the nature of the work and the desire of the employees (Lumen, 2025, p.3).

In the field of public administration, managers should share the goals of public administration and how it is managed with other elements of the organization by spending long hours, because after this stage, it is possible to reach the stage of making decisions together. The reason for this is that it is impossible to talk about sharing and joint decision-making in an organization that does not look in the same direction about principles and goals (Damar, 2018, p.1). Previously, decision-making in Turkish public administration was mostly carried out at the top management levels. In Turkey, the vital decisions regarding public administration were taken by the

central organization and the public administration implemented these decisions (Beycioğlu, 2007, p.69). However, especially since the 2000s, with the restructuring efforts gaining momentum in Turkish public administration, employee participation in decision-making is a recommended practice. This can contribute to the integration of employees within the organization, fostering coordination, team spirit, and collaborative work among employees. Furthermore, in Turkey, approaches and practices such as consulting stakeholders in the development of strategic plans and performance programs, implementing city councils in local governments, and consulting with relevant stakeholders in the drafting of regulations are examples of recent managerial participation in Turkish public administration. Participation leads to individuals' ownership of public policies, increases their quality, and enhances democratic compliance and the legality of decisions (Özer, 2017, pp.26,27).

3.6. In Terms of Considering Employees As A Whole

One of the qualities that constitute the essence of Theory Z is the consideration of employees as a whole. The theory sees people not as independent individuals but as units that cooperate within the framework of certain tasks (Kozlu, 2014, p.71). The main goal underlined by the theory is to bring management and staff together as if they were partners. Seeking solutions to some problems even outside of work, joint picnics, dinners and parties, birthday celebrations, unions, and a harmony between the organization and the employees are seen as a result of the understanding of organizational integration (Şahin, 2005, pp.184,185). As can be seen, Theory Z adopts a holistic point of view and in this way, it is thought that the efficiency of the employees will be reflected on the efficiency of the organization.

In Theory Z, it is thought that people's work life and their private and social lives are not separate from each other, and people relate to each other in business life with the effect of all their emotions (Öner, 1989, pp.35,36). The personnel working in this system trust the organization and have more sense of participation and as a result, they can think of themselves as one with the organization (Yakabe, 1985, p.45). As can be seen, in Theory Z, the desire of the employees to be attached to the organization is high, and this situation is actually a reciprocal cycle.

In Turkish public administration culture, power distance is high in the relations between the manager and the managed. In the management process, subordinates expect to be guided by a leader. As a result of the reflection of this power distance in Turkish culture, gaps between managers and employees may increase and employees may transfer their right to speak to the management level without any intervention. In this case, the distance and aloof attitude of the manager towards the employees in Turkish public administration comes to the fore (Yılmaz et al., 2023, p.390). The holistic approach to the employee or seeing the employee in his/her family and social environment is not seen as a management style formed by the managers in Turkish public administration. This situation may result in organizational members being indifferent to each other. In Turkish public administration, there is not much intensive information sharing among the personnel about educational methods. In fact, there is no common and holistic culture. However, by applying a holistic approach to the organization and addressing the employees not only in organizational life but also outside the organization, a strong participatory, cooperative and egalitarian organizational culture can be created instead of relationships based on formal balances in the organization (Beycioğlu, 2007, pp.69,70).

Conclusion and Evaluation

Organizations have their own values, beliefs, expectations and behavior patterns. In organizational terms, all these are called 'organizational culture'. While organizational culture shapes the way the organization is managed, there is a very close relationship between organizational culture and management culture in organizations. In

absolute terms, there are many effects of management culture on organizational culture and organizational culture on management culture.

There are many management theories that have gained an important place in the management literature and these theories have their own management and organizational cultures regarding personnel and management processes. Theories X and Y, which were created in the 1950s in the field of management, were insufficient to solve problems due to reasons such as the growth and complexity of organizations over time. In the 1980s, it became necessary to develop a new theory as a result of the shortcomings of these theories. In this direction, Theory Z came to the forefront. The focus of the Z Theory is managerial and organizational culture based on the individual. As it is known, organizations with strong managerial and organizational cultures can achieve their goals in the face of rapid changes and developments in the world. In Theory Z, much importance is given to the working personnel and the working personnel are actively involved in the management process. The management system based on Theory Z has managerial and organizational characteristics such as long-term employment, a slow appraisal promotion system, a career system that is not based on expertise, an informal control mechanism, participatory decision-making and treating employees as a whole, in which employees play a leading role.

When the existence of Theory Z in the Turkish public administration structure and its applicability in the Turkish public administration structure are examined; it is known that long-term employment in a job, which is an important feature of the management system that constitutes the basis of Theory Z, provides the opportunity to increase experience in working life as well as earning income for employees. It is not easy for many organizations and employees to make long-term employment commitments, but it can be said that Theory Z and the Turkish public administration structure have significant similarities in terms of long-term employment. In this field, contracted personnel, which has only recently emerged in the Turkish public administration, stands out as an exception. This situation eliminates the 100 percent similarity of Theory Z with the Turkish public administration.

Participatory decision-making, which is one of the main discourses of Theory Z, brings significant benefits in terms of employee loyalty to the organization, motivation, team understanding and coordination, but it cannot be stated that participation in decisions is not yet widely and effectively implemented in Turkish public administration. In Turkish public administration, decisions are predominantly made by the central organization. Members of the organization attend regular meetings within the organization and are involved in certain decision-making processes. This may hinder the expectations that contemporary organizations can achieve with this type of participation, such as the formation of a vision and an organizational culture based on cooperation and trust. In this case, a stronger structure should be created in Turkish public administration to ensure the participation of employees in decision-making. In addition, the command and control system that comes with hierarchical organization in Turkish public administration may prevent participation in decision-making.

The primary purpose of oversight a phenomenon present at every stage of social life in public administration is to correct and improve. For this reason, there is also a need for informal oversight mechanisms in public administration. As it is known, informal evaluations are much more flexible than formal evaluations. An audit mechanism that is meaningful, comprehensible, attaches importance to the priorities of the personnel and especially a flexible audit mechanism is very important in terms of empowering the personnel. In Turkish public administration, auditing is conducted as internal audit, external audit and performance audit. This form of auditing significantly hinders flexibility in the field of auditing in Turkish public administration. In terms of the characteristic of a career system that is not based on specialization, the general prediction is that the working personnel can have knowledge and skills in all areas of the job. If the staff can have knowledge and skills in all areas of the work, rather than in a single field, there will be many opportunities for the staff in working life. In Turkish public administration, there is no

holism in this regard, i.e. the personnel have knowledge and skills predominantly in the field they work in. Although this management feature is not seen much in Turkish public administration, there is still an effort to do so. It is stated that the slow appraisal and promotion system evaluates the knowledge or ability of the personnel on the condition that a certain period of time passes, and in this sense, it is seen in the theory that professional appraisal is spread over a long period of time. When Turkish public administration is analyzed in terms of slow appraisal and promotion, it is seen that promotions in Turkish public administration rarely depend on the length of service. This differentiates Turkish public administration systems from the characteristics of Theory Z administration. In the field of Turkish public administration, the knowledge and skills of the personnel are mostly emphasized.

Considering the employees as a whole is an understanding that advocates the necessity of considering the working personnel not only as an element of work but also their life outside their working life. It is a fact that people's work and families should not be separated from each other. In this sense, what is sought is the necessity to provide a balance between the work and family of the working personnel. However, when the Turkish public administration is examined in this sense, the business world is developing and becoming more complex day by day. Although balance efforts are on the agenda for the personnel working in the Turkish public administration field, the official legislation on this subject is limited. It is not difficult to make arrangements that provide a balance between work and private life, spending a little time on this issue and researching the elements that provide a balance between work and private life will provide good results for Turkish public administration employees.

In summary, since Z Theory is a theory worthy of examination and emulation in terms of enhancing organizational efficiency, effectiveness, success, and performance, a comprehensive literature review was conducted as part of this study. The research concluded that the management principles of Z Theory can be applied in the field of Turkish public administration. The main element in Theory Z is to give importance to the employees of the organization and the theory has a unique perspective. The main view advocated by the theory is; 'with the inclusion of working personnel in the management process, the organization will overcome all difficulties and achieve results such as efficiency, effectiveness, high performance and success for the organization and the employee'. Although Turkish public administration does not predominantly have the same qualities as the Z Theory, the way to apply these Z Theory features in Turkish public administration is open. From this point of view, it is obvious that some changes to be made in the field of Turkish public administration by taking Theory Z, which is an important management theory in the process of change that Turkish public administration is also affected by, will have positive results because the focus of Theory Z is the importance given to the personnel. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made for Turkish public administrators and staff:

Table 3: Recommendations for Turkish Public Administrators and Staff

Recommendations for Public Administrators	Recommendations for Employees
-Be able to foster an organizational culture rooted in human values and built on trust -They should be able to demonstrate leadership skills -Employees should be evaluated not only in terms of their duties but in every respect -They should act with the understanding that personnel are the most valuable asset of public administration	-Must fully embrace the established principles of the corporate culture

The table above presents recommendations that could be implemented in the field of Turkish public administration. While this study offers a new perspective on Turkish public administration, it is anticipated that these recommendations will also provide a practical contribution to the existing literature. This study, which examines the theoretical applicability of Theory Z in Turkish public administration, is expected to make a significant

contribution to the literature. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this study will serve as an important literature resource for human-centered management studies, which are recognized as key research areas in the digital age.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declared no potential conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

Support Financing Information: The authors have received no financial support for the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

Ethics Committee Decision: No ethical clearance is required for this study.

Author Contribution Rate: The study has a single author.

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