

The Effect of Organizational Culture on Perception of Organizational Justice: Mediating Role of Leader-Member Exchange and Perception of Organizational Favouritism

Örgüt Kültürünün Örgütsel Adalet Algısına Etkisi:
Lider-Üye Etkileşimi ve Örgütsel Kayırmacılık Algısının Aracılık Rolü

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the mediating role of leader-member exchange and perception of organizational favoritism in the impact of organizational culture sub-dimensions on perceptions of organizational justice. For this purpose, the research was conducted with the participation of 327 employees at the Tüasaş Sivas Regional Directorate. Structural equation modeling was used to test the hypotheses of the research model, which was constructed in accordance with the theoretical framework. The effects of organizational culture sub-dimensions on perceptions of organizational justice were examined as the main independent variables. It was found that clan orientation, supportive orientation, and growth orientation had positive and statistically significant effects on employees' perceptions of organizational justice, while normative orientation and hierarchical orientation had no effect on perceptions of organizational justice. With the inclusion of the mediating variables leader-member exchange and perception of organizational favoritism in the model, the direct effects of clan orientation and supportive orientation on perceptions of organizational justice were eliminated, and leader-member exchange assumed a full mediating role in this relationship. When examining the impact of growth orientation on perceptions of organizational justice, the mediating variables of leader-member exchange were found to have a positive and negative mediating role, both partially and jointly. The results indicate that an organization's cultural values are a significant factor in determining employees' perceptions of organizational justice. It was determined that employees' interactions with their leaders increase their perceptions of organizational justice, while perceived favoritism decreases their perceptions of organizational justice. The study's findings provide several recommendations for business managers and researchers.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Perception of Organizational Justice, Leader-Member Exchange, Organizational Favouritism

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı örgüt kültürü alt boyutlarının örgütsel adalet algısı üzerindeki etkisinde lider-üye etkileşimi ve örgütsel kayırmacılık algısının aracılık rolünü araştırmaktır. Bu amaçla araştırma, Tüasaş Sivas Bölge Müdürlüğü'nde toplam 327 personelin katılımı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Teorik altyapıya uygun bir şekilde kurgulanan araştırma modelinin hipotezlerini test etmek için yapısal eşitlik modellemesi kullanılmıştır. Temel bağımsız değişken olarak örgüt kültürü alt boyutlarının örgütsel adalet algısı üzerindeki etkisine bakılmış, klan eğilimi, destekleyicilik eğilimi ve gelişme eğiliminin çalışanların örgütsel adalet algıları üzerinde pozitif yönlü ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlı etkilere sahip olduğu, kuralcılık eğilimi ve hiyerarşi eğiliminin örgütsel adalet algısı üzerinde herhangi bir etkisinin olmadığı tespit edilmiştir. Aracı değişkenler olan lider-üye etkileşimi ve örgütsel kayırmacılık algısının modele dâhil edilmesiyle klan eğilimi ve destek eğiliminin örgütsel adalet algısı üzerindeki direkt etkisinin ortadan kalktığı, lider-üye etkileşiminin bu ilişkide tam aracılık rolü üstlenmiş olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Gelişme eğiliminin örgütsel adalet algısı üzerindeki etkisi incelendiğinde, aracı değişkenler olan lider-üye etkileşiminin pozitif ve örgütsel kayırmacılık algısının negatif yönlü olmak üzere birlikte ve kısmi aracılık rolü üstlendiği tespit edilmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlar örgütün kültürel değerlerinin çalışanların örgütsel adalet algısının belirlenmesinde önemli bir faktör olduğunu, çalışanların liderleriyle etkileşimlerinin örgütsel adalet algısını artırırken algıladıkları kayırmacılığın örgütsel adalet algılarını azalttığı saptanmıştır. Araştırmada ulaşılan sonuçlar çerçevesinde işletme yöneticilerine ve araştırmacılara yönelik çeşitli öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Örgüt Kültürü, Örgütsel Adalet Algısı, Lider-Üye Etkileşimi, Örgütsel Kayırmacılık

Introduction

As social beings, humans require many things, both physically and emotionally. Justice is one of the needs that ranks at the top of a person's emotional needs. In today's world, where resource scarcity is increasingly prevalent, the diversification and increase in human needs heighten the demand for justice and sensitivity towards ensuring and establishing justice. Justice is as important for organizations as it is for individuals. Under today's conditions, acquiring and retaining skilled blue-collar and white-collar workers imposes a significant cost burden on organizations. However, organizations that manage to retain qualified workers despite these costs gain a major competitive advantage. In the 21st century, organizations are considered a *"new living space" for employees* (Mumcu & Döven, 2016), and the importance of the organization for people, and of people for the organization, is increasing. If organizations want to survive long-term and achieve a competitive advantage, they must treat their employees fairly (Özyer & Azizoğlu, 2014, p. 97).

It can be said that many factors influence perceptions of organizational justice. According to Leung (2005, p. 556), organizational culture is a crucial factor in shaping the perception of organizational justice. Organizational culture, as an important factor shaping employees' perceptions of what the rules and criteria related to organizational justice are and how they should be applied, serves as a guide for employees' behavior within the organization. This study investigates the impact of organizational culture on organizational justice perceptions as an antecedent of employees' perceptions of organizational justice. It is believed that organizational culture, with its many different aspects, has the power to influence employees' perceptions of organizational justice. The relationships the organization establishes with its employees in terms of compliance with rules, sensitivity to the chain of command, viewing the organization as a family and employees as family members, supporting the individual development of employees, being tolerant of mistakes, and supporting new approaches and ideas may influence these employees' perceptions of organizational justice.

Many variables can be mentioned that influence the perception of organizational justice and are also influenced by organizational culture; in other words, these variables are predicted to mediate between these two variables. In this research, within the framework of the reviewed literature, it is thought that leader-member interaction and the perception of organizational favoritism may play a mediating role. While some of the topics studied within the organizational behavior literature are specific to certain

organizations, concepts such as organizational culture, perceived organizational justice, and leader-member exchange are concepts that exist in all organizations and affect every employee to a greater or lesser extent. As a matter of fact, there are many studies in the literature that examine the relationships between these concepts.

Leader-member exchange theory, unlike traditional leadership styles, is based on the assumption that the relationship a leader establishes with each subordinate is different and unique from others (Liden and Maslyn, 1998, p. 43). The leader has the power to influence the perception of organizational justice among all employees, especially regarding resource allocation, through the decisions he/she makes. When it is predicted that subordinates with whom the leader has a close relationship (in-group) will be more advantaged than others (out-group) in terms of utilizing organizational opportunities, a negative perception of justice may arise among employees.

Another concept hypothesized to influence employees' perceptions of organizational justice is the perception of organizational favoritism. Favoritism means "ensuring success by protecting, supporting, being benevolent, keeping someone at the expense of others or the business, providing unfair advantages, or favoring someone" (TDK Dictionary, 2011, p. 1364). Favoritist behavior in organizations is often perceived negatively by employees and leads to injustice among employees (Altıntaş, 2020, p. 65). Using organizational favoritism as a mediating variable in the relationship between organizational culture and the perception of organizational justice suggests that any type of organizational culture can increase organizational favoritism. Although there are very few studies on this subject, the majority of existing studies investigate the relationship between national culture and favoritism behaviors.

This study has two primary objectives. First, it is to test whether employees' perceptions of organizational justice are influenced by organizational culture. Second, it is to investigate whether leader-member exchange, which is predicted to contribute positively to organizational culture's impact on perceptions of organizational justice, and perceptions of organizational favoritism, which is predicted to contribute negatively, mediate the effect. Within this framework, the concepts used as research variables were first examined, and their relationships were demonstrated through case studies. Then, the research hypotheses were determined, and the relationships among organizational culture, perceptions of organizational justice, leader-member exchange, and perceptions of organizational favoritism were analyzed, delving into the

sub-dimensions of the variables.

Theoretical Background

In this part of the study, our research variables, namely organizational justice perception, organizational culture, leader-member exchange, and organizational favoritism perception, will be briefly explained.

Organizational Culture

It's inevitable for every organization to have a culture. Organizations are made up of people, and organizational culture is formed by the formal or informal interactions between individuals within the organization. Just as human communities have different cultures, different structures within a community can also have different cultures. The fundamental characteristic that distinguishes societies and systems from one another is their culture (Köse et al., 2001, p. 220).

According to Eren (2001, p. 136), organizational culture is *"a matter that reflects the characteristics of a community in the family, all institutions and organizations in society, nation and state and all formal and informal groupings and organizes its relations with its environment."* Organizational Culture, according to Moore (1985), is *"a set of shared meanings"*, according to Sathe (1983), it is *"beliefs and values shared by members of the organization"*, according to Trice and Beyer (1984), *"a network of meanings that includes values, norms and ideologies"*, according to Pettigrew (1979), *"a system of commonly shared meanings in any place, time and group"*, Smircich (1985) defines it as *"perceptions, meanings, beliefs and values shared by members of the organization"*, according to Kilmann et al. (1998), it is *"norms, attitudes, expectations, beliefs, assumptions, values, ideologies and values that bind a group together and are shared by the group"* (Şişman, 2011, p. 81).

Researchers analyzing organizational cultures have categorized organizations according to various cultural characteristics, resulting in the emergence of numerous organizational models and approaches. It's not surprising that so many models and approaches emerge regarding a concept like culture, which varies across societies. The Orientation Approach, developed by Danişman and Özgen (2003), which we will utilize in this research, is summarized below.

"Örgüt Kültürü Çalışmalarında Yöntem Tartışması: Niteliksel-Niceliksel Yöntem İkileminde Niceliksel Ölçümler ve Bir Ölçek Önerisi" by Danişman and Özgen (2003, pp. 91-124), the development process of the concept of organizational culture in the field of management

organization was investigated, the studies carried out to understand and measure the concept in its historical development were mentioned, and finally, the studies using quantitative criteria were summarized/grouped, and an organizational culture scale consisting of nine sub-dimensions was formed. This scale was preferred with the assumption that it is more suitable for Turkish organizational culture and can explain the organizational culture more strongly.

Researchers attempting to measure organizational culture using quantitative methods have focused on certain cultural elements, addressed their analyses at different levels, and defined different dimensions/typologies. The dimensions defined by Danişman and Özgen (2003, p. 104) are; "rule-following (bureaucracy/control) tendency, hierarchy tendency, outcome (process) orientation, clan (family and relationship) orientation, person (job orientation/supportive culture) orientation, team (individual/group work) orientation, development (flexibility/adaptability/stability/stagnation) orientation, professionalism (rationalism) orientation, and openness orientation."

Leader-Member Exchange

Leadership is defined as *"the process by which an individual influences and directs the activities of others to achieve specific personal or group goals under specific conditions"* (Koçel, 2014). For those who follow a leader, leadership is *"a person whom a group of people follow to achieve their own personal or group goals, acting in accordance with his wishes, orders, and instructions"* (Koçel, 2014, p. 668).

When investigating how a leader's characteristics and behaviors affect followers, the problem is often approached by *assuming that "subordinates are similar, and the leader will treat all subordinates the same way"* (House & Aditya, 1997, p. 446). However, contrary to this assumption, managers do not, or cannot, establish homogeneous relationships with all subordinates at the same level. In addition to workload and time constraints (Arıkan & Çalışkan, 2013, p. 3), relationships between leaders and subordinates are shaped by interactions that occur over time.

The most important feature of leader-member exchange theory is that, unlike classical approaches, it approaches the concept of leadership from a *"relationship-oriented"* perspective. In LMX theory, the focus is on the interrelationship between the leader and his/her subordinates, rather than the leader and his/her

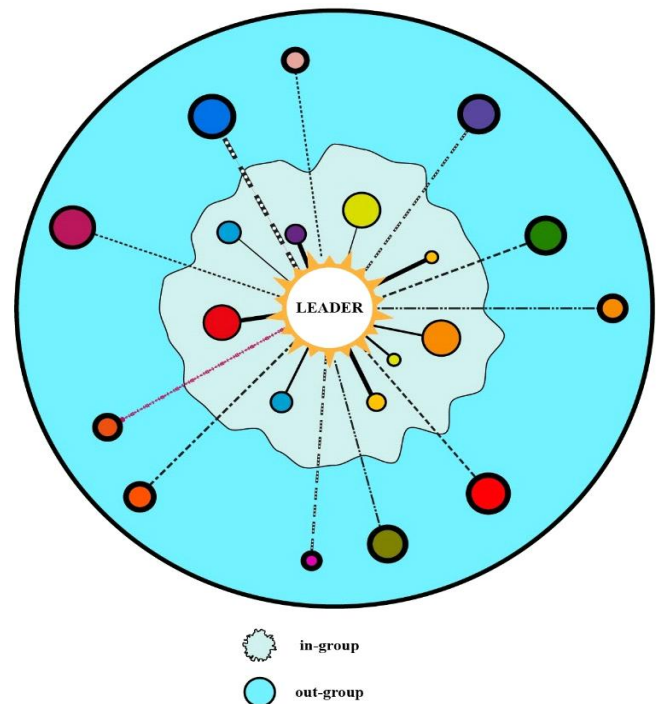
subordinates (Aslan & Özata, 2009, p. 98; Martin et al., 2005, p. 141; Case, 1998, p. 389).

The theory of leader-member exchange is based on the study conducted by Graen, Dansereau, and Minami (1972, p. 217) and two studies conducted by Dansereau, Cashman, and Graen (1973, pp. 187-190), which are a continuation of this study. In the first study, the "*Average Leadership Style (ALS)*" was developed, based on the assumption that the leader has an average management style and that leadership behaviors are stable. However, even if leaders treat all employees the same, the relationship that develops between each leader and their follower/employee/subordinate/member is different from the other. In the second study, the authors focused on the specific relationship between the leader and each follower and called these different relationships the "*Vertical Dyadic Linkage Model (VDL)*". This model, which brought a new perspective on leadership, focused on the interaction between the leader and the followers and has been termed "*Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX)*" in the literature (Dansereau et al., 1975, p.72).

Each vertical relationship between a leader and their followers is unique and distinct from the others. This is primarily due to leaders' time constraints and the criticality of subordinates' positions for both the organization and the leader. Leaders will spend more of their already limited time with subordinates in critical positions, thus interacting with them more and getting to know each other better (Karcioğlu & Kahya, 2011, pp. 339-340).

In the leader-member exchange model presented in Figure 1, as outlined in light of the studies summarized above, the leader is naturally at the center of the organization. The boundaries of the large outer circle represent the organization. There are two distinct clusters within the organization beyond the leader. The smaller circle with irregular boundaries, closer to the leader, represents the in-group, while the area outside the in-group represents the out-group. Subordinates in the in-group have closer bilateral relationships with the leader. The leader spends more time with them, supports them, rewards them, and ensures their participation in decision-making. Employees in the in-group, on the other hand, assume more responsibility, invest more effort and time, and thus increase individual and organizational output. This allows them to maintain uninterrupted communication and interaction with the leader.

Figure 1
Leader-Member Exchange Model



Individuals within an organization naturally have different structures and personalities from other employees due to their unique characteristics. Therefore, in Figure 1, each employee is represented in different colors and sizes. Different colors represent different employee characteristics, while different sizes represent different approaches to work and differences in their contributions to the organization. Furthermore, there are continuous and dashed lines of varying thicknesses connecting each employee to the leader, representing the interaction between the employee and the leader. This is due to the emphasis placed on the most important aspect of leader-member exchange theory: "*the leader's relationship with each employee must be distinct from that of others*". The lines within the in-group are solid, representing the continuity of the leader-member interaction, and are drawn at varying thicknesses to indicate the strength of this interaction. Similar considerations apply to out-group members. However, the out-group employees, who have low levels of interaction with the leader, who do not take responsibility for the organization beyond the formal and standard tasks required by their job, and who do not exert extra effort, are represented by dashed lines. Although employees are divided into two groups: the out-group and the in-group, this criterion may not be sufficiently descriptive of their closeness to the leader. For example, one employee in the same group might be closer to the leader than the other.

Or, even within the same group, employees might perceive leader-member interactions differently from others. Therefore, some employees are in the same group but closer to the leader at the center of the organization, while others are further away. There is no strong, clear boundary separating the in-group subordinates and the out-group subordinates. The irregular, thinly drawn boundaries between the two groups emphasize the permeability between them. Furthermore, the mere hue of the background colors serves to *"represent different informal groups within the same organization"*.

The leader and subordinates in the in-group trust each other more and interact more. The leader provides more support to subordinates in the in-group and rewards them more, both formally and informally. Their relationship with employees in the out-group is limited, characterized by less trust, less interaction, and reward. Almost all leaders quickly differentiate their subordinates by building relationships with them based on concepts such as trust, support, reward, and interaction. This differentiation is achieved very quickly and is not easily changed (Dienesch & Liden, 1986, p. 621). Toward subordinates in the in-group, the leader is more tolerant, creates an attractive environment for employees, strives to increase team spirit and individual enthusiasm, offers innovative solutions to problems, and strives to support employees in every way (Boerner et al., 2007, pp. 16-17). Subordinates in closer proximity to the leader have certain advantages stemming from being in the in-group. More organizational support, greater access to organizational resources and opportunities, career planning, and advancement are all advantages for subordinates. Similarly, leaders who interact with the in-group benefit from this interaction. Having employees who are wholeheartedly committed to their work, the orders and tasks given to them, and their organization, who work hard and go the extra mile, is a significant advantage for leaders. (Deluga & Perry, 1994, pp. 67-68). Subordinates in the out-group, on the other hand, mostly perform routine tasks within their own units. They have a more formal relationship with the management team (Liden & Graen, 1980, p. 452).

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995, p. 223) suggest that the leader-member exchange model consists of the dimensions of respect, trust, and loyalty. Dienesch and Liden (1986), after conducting a literature review on leadership, discussed the model's theoretical and methodological challenges. They argued that the leader-member exchange model has a multidimensional structure, suggesting that this measurement would be more accurate. They also suggested conceptualizing the leader-member exchange

model as a three-dimensional structure: *"impact", "contribution", and "loyalty"*. In addition to these three dimensions, Liden and Maslyn (1998) identified *"professional respect"* as another dimension of the leader-member exchange model and developed a four-dimensional structure.

Perceived Organizational Favoritism

Favoritism can be seen among individuals who are related to each other at every level of society. Many social relationships, such as kinship, friendship, intimacy, belonging to the same profession, sect, disposition, city, religion, religious order, neighborhood, and so on, bring people closer together and pave the way for favoritism (Kurtoğlu, 2012, p. 148; Özkanan & Erdem, 2015, p. 8). The social status of those who engage in favoritism, along with the nature and purpose of their favoritism, has led to a variety of different favoritism behaviors, and over time, these behaviors have been conceptualized.

Favor means *"ensuring success by protecting, keeping, favoring, keeping someone at the expense of others or the business, providing unfair advantages to someone, or granting favors"* (TDK Sözlüğü, 2011, s. 1364). Favoritism can be defined as *"deviation from rights and justice"* in favor of a group or community beyond the favorer and the favored (Erdem, 2010, p. 1). The concept of nepotism is used as *"favouritism"* in British English and *"favoritism"* in American English, and this concept is given the meaning of *"unfair support of a person or group by someone in authority"* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2007, p. 457).

Researchers have generally examined favoritism from a managerial perspective, with definitions based on the assumption that superiors favor certain subordinates. For example, according to Argon (2016, p. 234), favoritism is *"the unfair and unlawful favoritism and support of relatives by an employee performing managerial duties"*. Although it causes numerous problems and disruptions within the system, favoritism, which has not yet been definitively resolved (Çakır, 2014, p. 18), appears in practices such as *"offering employment opportunities, promotions, training opportunities, compensation and rewards, and performance evaluation"*, which are among human resources activities (Çetinkaya et al., 2017, p. 124).

Favoritism is a phenomenon that exists across diverse social segments, arising from various relationships, affinities, or expectations. Because it exists across such a wide spectrum, it is difficult to clearly distinguish different types of favoritism and to classify them based on specific

characteristics. While often viewed as a negative behavior, favoritism, with its diverse types and intertwined nature, has been addressed by numerous researchers, resulting in a confusion of concepts in the literature.

The most comprehensive classification of types of favoritism was made by Özkanan and Erdem (2015), who first divided favoritism into two types: favoritism and ideological favoritism. Favoritism is related to the personalities of the individuals favored. In other words, it is related to "*who they are*". It is possible to speak of favoritism when the favored person is someone else's relative, relative, friend, or acquaintance. According to Aktan (1992, p. 31), the concepts of favoritism and favoritism are used interchangeably with favoritism. Favoritism manifests itself in the forms of nepotism, cronyism, tribalism, and fellow countrymanism.

Özkanan and Erdem's (2015) classification, ideological favoritism, the second dominant type of favoritism, is divided into two: "*political favoritism*" and "*hierocratic favoritism*". Political favoritism, in turn, is further subdivided into three categories: patronage, clientelism, and service favoritism. The source of ideological favoritism is not a matter of who a person is, but rather of their lifestyle and worldview, as well as their religious or political beliefs, ideals, and ideologies. Because of the intertwined nature of political and religious thoughts and ideals, ideological favoritism has given rise to concepts that are difficult to separate in both theory and practice.

Perceived Organizational Justice

The meaning attributed to the concept of justice is generally defined in dictionaries as "*compliance with the law*", implying that everything that complies with the law is also just. However, even the full and correct implementation of the law may not always ensure and establish justice. The multifaceted and multidimensional nature of the concept of justice not only renders the meanings attributed to it inadequate but also prevents the emergence of a consensus-based definition (Çeçen, 1993, p. 19). Because the concept of justice has a complex and intricate structure of meaning, it does not manifest in a single form or situation. Therefore, other concepts are needed when explaining or giving meaning to the concept. Concepts that explain the concept of justice and are often used in conjunction with it include *equality*, *freedom*, *conscience (equality)*, *benefit*, *resistance*, and *punishment* (Çeçen, 1993, pp. 42-66).

According to Ibn Khaldun, justice occurs when an individual who uses the benefits provided by society contributes to the society in which he lives within the framework of the benefits provided to him, and when the

elements of trust and balance are observed during the allocation of benefits between individuals and the individual's contribution to society (Sönmez, 2018, pp. 149-150).

When employees join an organization, they aim to achieve certain benefits in return for the effort they invest. Earning a gain as a result of physical or intellectual labor, and wanting to be fully compensated for the effort they put into achieving this gain, is quite a rational expectation for employees. Employees don't focus solely on their own gains. By comparing their own gains with those of other employees they refer to, they analyze whether the organization treats all its employees differently. This analysis is conducted through certain "*fairness criteria*" determined by employees themselves (Bağcı, 2013, p. 165).

The gains that employees aim to achieve in return for their efforts in the organization are mostly matters such as salary, wages, and promotion, which fall within the scope of the organization's human resources department. (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998, p. 1). Greenberg (1996, p. 24) defines organizational justice more generally and defines it as the "*perceived justice*" of employees regarding practices within the organization. Organizational justice, a high perception of justice among employees, helps these employees develop more positive attitudes and behaviors toward the organization and other employees (Anderson & Shinew, 2003, p. 229). Conversely, employees' concerns about justice can influence, and even change, their attitudes and behaviors toward the organization and their colleagues (Judge & Colquitt, 2004, p. 395).

An examination of the organizational justice literature reveals that organizational justice sub-dimensions are comprised of distributive justice, interactional justice, and one of the following: procedural justice or process justice. Researchers have sometimes used these concepts interchangeably, sometimes using procedural justice, process justice as a third dimension alongside distributive justice and interactional justice.

This third dimension, which creates confusion in academic studies, is called "*process justice*" in some studies (İçerli, 2010; Yıldız, 2014). Based on the work of Greenberg (1990), Niehoff and Moorman (1993) named this dimension as procedural justice, as stated by Thibaut and Walker, and classified this dimension into two sub-dimensions; "*formal processes and interactional justice*". *The concept of procedural justice has been used in most of the studies in the national literature* (İyigün, 2012; Mumcu, 2020; Mumcu & Döven, 2016; Özyer & Azizoğlu, 2014; Yıldız & Develi, 2018). In some studies, it is seen that the concept of "*Procedural justice*" is translated as process

justice (Karacaoğlu & Yörük, 2012; Polatçı & Yılmaz, 2018; Tutar, 2007).

Relationships Between Organizational Culture, Leader-Member Exchange Perception of Favoritism, and Organizational Justice: A Model Proposal

The literature review revealed no studies combining all four research variables. Only three studies correlated all three research variables or their sub-dimensions, and information about these studies is provided below.

Tziner et al. (2008), analyzed data from 75 participants working in a public organization in their study examining the mediating role of organizational culture in the impact of organizational justice on leader-member exchange and job performance. Their findings predicted that two dimensions of organizational culture, employee support and attention to detail, would influence both leader-member exchange and organizational justice. However, contrary to the theoretical model, two sub-dimensions of organizational culture were found to mediate the relationship between organizational justice and leader-member exchange.

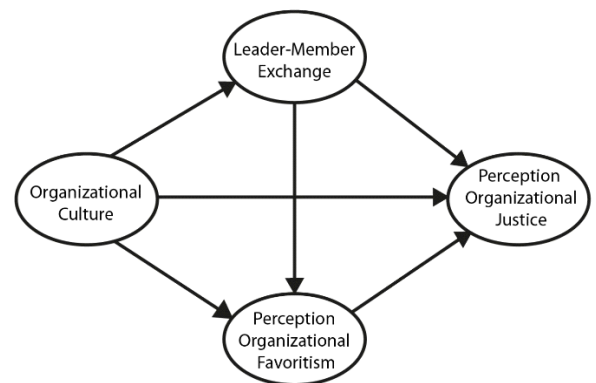
Erdogan et al. (2006) collected data from 516 teachers at 30 secondary schools in Istanbul using a survey. The findings of the analysis indicate that respect for people, a sub-dimension of organizational culture, has a positive effect on interactional justice on leader-member exchange, while team-oriented culture, another sub-dimension of organizational culture, harms this relationship. Regarding the moderating effect of distributive justice on leader-member exchange, the effect of aggressive culture on this relationship was found to decrease as the effect of team-oriented culture increases. Additionally, it was found that leader-member exchange is higher in schools with a team-oriented culture.

Erdogan (2002) proposed a model to theoretically identify the antecedents and consequences of employees' perceptions of organizational justice in performance evaluations. In the proposed model, procedural justice is first divided into two distinct dimensions: evaluative procedural justice and systemic procedural justice. The aim here is to separately identify the source and type of justice. He then argues that contextual factors such as perceived organizational support, organizational culture, and the quality of leader-member exchange are among the antecedents of employees' perceptions of justice.

A review of the literature on organizational culture, perception of favoritism, leader-member exchange, and organizational justice reveals that these concepts are included in theoretical and empirical studies as independent, dependent, and mediating variables. Employees' understanding and acceptance of organizational culture will improve the quality of their interactions with their leaders. Similarly, it is possible that practices shaped by organizational culture may lead to favoritism within the organization. As leader-member exchange increases, organizational justice will increase, while as perceptions of favoritism increase, perceptions of organizational justice will decrease. Based on these predictions, the model demonstrating the relationships and effects of these concepts is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Research Model



Materials and Methods

Purpose of Research

The aim of this study is to determine the effect of organizational culture, which is an important factor for employees in organizations, on organizational justice and to reveal the role of favoritism behaviors perceived by employees and the level of leader-member exchange in this relationship.

Population and Sample

TÜRASAS Sivas Regional Directorate employs 1292 people. Only 44 female employees work at the facility, and given that this facility can be classified as heavy industry, it is quite understandable that the proportion of female employees is so low. The percentage of employees with five years or less of experience is 6.04%. 6.5% of the

employees are primary or secondary school graduates, with the majority being high school graduates. The high school graduate rate is 67.49%, amounting to 872 people. 241 employees have graduated from undergraduate or graduate programs. Another striking statistic is the employee age. The percentage of employees under 30 (11.07%) (143 employees) is 41, and older (60.83%), making the majority of middle-aged employees at this company.

In the study, 650 survey forms were distributed to employees who had received occupational health and safety training, following a brief information presentation at the end of the training session, and 465 of these were returned. As a result of the data collection study conducted using convenience sampling, 138 of the 465 survey forms collected from respondents were excluded from the analysis because they lacked sufficient measurement capacity or information. A total of 327 survey forms were used for analysis. Information on the personnel who responded to the survey is presented in Table 1.

Data Collection

Organizational Culture Scale

The organizational culture scale used in this study is a short form organizational culture scale consisting of 6 dimensions and 24 statements, based on the scale developed by Danişman and Özgen (2003), which consists of 53 statements and 9 dimensions, and for which Şeşen (2010) conducted validity and reliability studies. The scale developed by Danişman and Özgen (2003) was derived from a study covering 17 companies operating in Turkey and Canada. The scale, which was used in another study by Danişman & Özgen (2008), confirms the 9-dimensional structure.

However, in another study by Kaya (2008), the organizational culture scale used was subjected to factor analysis, which resulted in the recommendation to reduce the number of dimensions in the original scale by combining the dimensions of supportiveness tendency, team tendency, and clan tendency under a single dimension. Şeşen (2010), following Kaya's suggestion, reorganized the scale into 6 dimensions and 24 items, finding the scale's total reliability coefficient/Cronbach Alpha to be 0.86.

In the research, confirmatory factor analysis was performed using a structural equation model to test the construct validity of the organizational culture scale. The first-level confirmatory factor analysis conducted on organizational culture revealed that the scale exhibited a five-factor distribution, differing from its original six-factor structure.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Employees Responding to the Survey Forms Used in the Research (Sample Statistics)

		Frequency	%
Gender	Woman	14	4.28
	Male	313	95.72
Total		327	100
Marital Status	Married	277	84.71
	Single	50	15.29
Total		327	100
Work Contract Type	Regular	253	77.37
	Subcontractor	74	22.63
Total		327	100
Age	19-30	58	17.74
	31-40	109	33.33
	41-50	114	34.86
	51 and above	46	14.07
Total		327	100
Staff Status	Employee	211	64.53
	Officer	116	35.47
Total		327	100
Work Experience	1-5 Years	43	13.15
	6-15 Years	114	34.86
	16-25 Years	107	32.72
	26 and Above	63	19.27
Total		327	100
Educational Status	Primary/ Secondary School	17	5.2
	High school	183	55.96
	Associate Degree	43	13.15
	Licence and Above	84	25.69
Total		327	100

All 4 statements belonging to the "openness" sub-dimension, 1 statement belonging to the "clan" sub-dimension, 1 statement belonging to the "rule" sub-dimension, 1 statement belonging to the "development" sub-dimension, one statement from the "hierarchy" sub-dimension, and two statements from the "support" sub-dimension, for a total of 10 statements, were excluded from the analysis. The analysis revealed that the statements belonging to these sub-dimensions were not fully understood by the respondents, and therefore, the factor loadings of the statements did not reach sufficient

levels. When we examine the statements regarding the exact measurement of the openness sub-dimension within the organizational culture scale, we see that it is defined as *"the degree to which the organization supports or discourages transparent and comfortable discussions and initiatives in resolving conflicts and problems within the organization"* (Danışman & Özgen, 2003, p. 106). The openness dimension was excluded from the analysis because it was believed that conflict and disagreements would be minimal in an organization where employee roles and responsibilities were clearly defined. The goodness-of-fit values for the final five-dimensional structure of the organizational culture scale are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Organizational Culture Scale CFA Goodness of Fit Values

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
Org. Culture Scale (5D)	124,134*	67	1,853	0.51	0.901	0.954	0.952	0.924

* $p < .01$

Organization culture 5D scale factor to its structure according to applied Cronbach Alpha internal coherence coefficient yielded the following results; 0.759 for the clan tendency dimension, 0.786 for the rule-following tendency dimension, 0.843 for the development tendency dimension, 0.755 for the hierarchy tendency dimension, 0.842 for the supportiveness tendency dimension, and finally, the cumulative Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the organizational culture scale was found to be 0.786. Based on the relevant data, it was concluded that the 5D structure of the organizational culture scale is valid and reliable.

Organizational Justice Scale

The organizational justice scale developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) was used to measure employees' perceptions of organizational justice in the study. The scale consists of three dimensions and 20 items. Adapted to Turkish by Yıldırım (2002) and tested for validity and reliability, the scale is frequently used in organizational justice studies (Yürür, 2018).

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the construct validity of the organizational justice perception scale, and it was determined that the scale retained its original three-dimensional, 20-item structure. Factor loadings for the sub-dimensions of the scale ranged from 0.644 to 0.823 for procedural justice, 0.644 to 0.779 for distributive justice, and 0.805 to 0.884 for interactional

justice. The goodness-of-fit values for the confirmatory factor analysis results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Organizational Justice Scale CFA Fit Goodness Results

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
ÖA Scale (3D)	344,213*	160	2,151	0.59	0.921	0.956	0.906	0.872

* $p < .01$

Confirmatory factor analysis results indicate that the statistical data belonging to the three-factor structure of the scale have good fit values. After the validity analysis, Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficients were calculated for the organizational justice scale and its subscales; showing that the procedural justice sub-dimension was 0.872, the distributive justice sub-dimension was 0.778, the interactional justice sub-dimension was 0.941, and the cumulative Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.943, and it was decided that it was reliable.

Leader-Member Exchange Scale

Another scale used in this study was the Leader-Member Exchange Scale developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998). Liden & Maslyn (1998) added the *"professional respect"* dimension to the three-dimensional structure (influence, contribution, and loyalty) developed by Dienesch and Liden (1986), creating a scale with four dimensions and 12 items. The adaptation of the scale to Turkish and its validity and reliability were conducted by Baş et al. (2010). Cronbach's alpha coefficients, which indicate the internal consistency of the scale, were found to be 0.92 for the influence dimension, 0.70 for the contribution dimension, 0.86 for the loyalty dimension, and 0.90 for the professional respect dimension.

Confirmatory factor analysis conducted within the framework of research data related to the leader-member exchange scale revealed that the scale exhibited a distribution consistent with its original four-dimensional structure. Analyzing the factor loadings, the effect size ranged from 0.747 to 0.813, the contribution dimension from 0.540 to 0.839, the commitment dimension from 0.627 to 0.834, and the professional respect dimension from 0.747 to 0.757. The statistical data for the goodness-of-fit values obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis are shown in Table 4.

Accordingly, the goodness-of-fit values of the four-dimensional structure of the leader-member exchange scale were within acceptable limits, and the leader-member exchange scale was validated within the current

sample.

Table 4

CFA Goodness of Fit Results for the LMX Scale

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
LMX Scale (4 Dimensional)	107,802*	48	2,151	0.61	0.929	0.959	0.951	0.92

* $p < .01$

According to the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient analysis results, which were conducted to determine the reliability of the scale and its sub-dimensions, the effect dimension had a coefficient of 0.820, the contribution dimension 0.739, the commitment dimension 0.671, the professional respect dimension 0.795, and the cumulative leader-member exchange scale 0.807, indicating that the scale is reliable.

Organizational Favoritism Scale

The "*Organizational Favoritism Perception Scale (OFPS)*" used in the study, as previously mentioned, is the only original scale for this study. The purpose of using this original scale instead of scales used in the national literature is that the components that constitute favoritism behaviour, which have a rather complex structure, have not been clearly defined, and consequently, the scales purporting to measure favoritism have focused on only one point: "*At what stage of work life does favoritism occur?*"

This scale used in the study focuses on the reasons for the emergence of the concept of favoritism. The Organizational Favoritism Perception Scale (OFPS Scale), unlike the study by Asunakutlu and Avcı (2009), attempts to answer the question, "*If there is favoritism in a company, at what stage of work life does this behavior occur?*" (is it during recruitment, processing, or promotion?), rather than seeking an answer to the question, "*If there is favoritism in a company, what could be the reason for it?*".

For this purpose, national and international literature was reviewed within the context of the "*process of developing an original psychological measurement tool*" proposed by Seçer (2018), and it was found that the concept of favoritism occurs in a wide range of areas, both in social and professional life. To measure this behavior, which we frequently encounter in every aspect of life and in professional life, an item pool was created by examining the theoretical framework. The statements in the fifty-item pool were revised in consultation with four different experts in the field. Subsequently, two experts in test development in the social sciences reviewed the statements, and the number of statements was reduced to

29. A pilot study was conducted with this 29-item scale covering employees of the Türasaş Sivas Regional Directorate. It was decided to exclude statements related to "*fellow townsman favoritism*" from the scale for the purpose of this research because, although the Türasaş Sivas Regional Directorate is a public sector entity, almost all of its employees are from Sivas province. The development process of the OFP Scale was carried out by Günay and Özyer (2022) and was published as an article titled "*Validity and Reliability Analysis of the Organizational Favoritism Perception (OFP) Scale in the Context of Turkish Culture*".

According to the results of the exploratory factor analysis conducted for the OFP scale, five sub-dimensions consisting of 21 statements were formed, and the dimensions of favoritism toward friends and acquaintances and ingroup favoritism were combined into a single dimension and named the "anonymous/general favoritism dimension." The factor loadings of the five subdimensions in the scale were as follows: Kinship favoritism for 0.525-0.915, general favoritism for 0.543-0.856, political-ideological favoritism for 0.659-0.790, belief favoritism for 0.791-0.886, and for gender favoritism in the range of 0.761-0.869 detection has been done. Furthermore, the total variance explained by the original OFP scale was found to be 67.649%. Another analysis conducted to test the construct validity of the organizational favoritism perception scale was a confirmatory factor analysis. The first-level confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the distribution of factor loadings ranged from 0.624 to 0.824 for anonymous/public favoritism, 0.729 to 0.834 for religious favoritism, 0.680 to 0.873 for gender favoritism, 0.697 to 0.886 for political/ideological favoritism, and 0.654 to 0.866 for kin favoritism. The CFA goodness-of-fit values for the OFP scale are shown in Table 5, indicating that the scale has good fit index values.

Table 5

CFA Goodness of Fit Values of the OFP Scale

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
OFP Scale (5 Dimensional)	349,496*	177	1,975	0.55	0.905	0.957	0.912	0.886

* $p < .01$

Finally, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients for the ÖKA scale and its subscales were 0.833 for anonymous/ general favoritism, 0.845 for kinship favoritism, 0.821 for political/ideological favoritism, 0.854 for religious favoritism, and 0.845 for gender favoritism. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the entire scale was

calculated as 0.910.

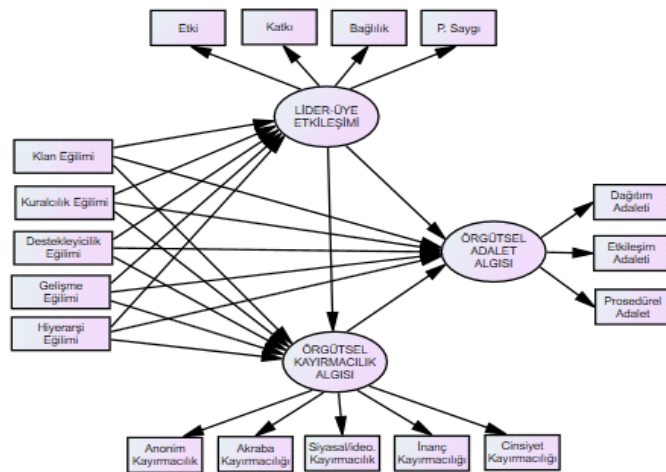
Research Model and Hypotheses

IBM SPSS 23.0 (IBM SPSS Corp., Armonk, NY, USA) and AMOS 23.0 software packages were used to analyze the research data. AMOS structural equation modeling was used to determine the estimated effects in the research model and to conduct validity analyses of the scales. Confirmatory factor analysis, structural regression (path analysis), and mediation analyses were conducted using the structural equation model.

The primary objective of this study is to determine the role of leader-member exchange and perceptions of organizational favoritism in the impact of organizational culture on employees' perceptions of organizational justice. The resulting model, when the dependent and independent variables of the study are presented at the dimension level, taking into account pilot study, exploratory factor analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis data, is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Detailed Statement of Research Dimensions



The research hypotheses put forward with the help of the model, including the research sub-dimensions in Figure 3, are given below.

H₁: Organizational culture sub-dimensions (clan tendency, normative tendency, support tendency, development tendency, and hierarchical tendency) have an impact on leader-member exchange.

H_{1a}: Clan affiliation has an effect on leader-member exchange.

H_{1b}: The tendency towards normativity has an impact on leader-member exchange.

H_{1c}: Supportiveness tendency has an effect on leader-member exchange.

H_{1d}: Growth tendency has an impact on leader-member exchange.

H_{1e}: Hierarchy tendency has an effect on leader-member exchange.

H₂: Organizational culture sub-dimensions (clan tendency, normative tendency, support tendency, development tendency, and hierarchical tendency) affect the perception of organizational favoritism.

H_{2a}: Clan affiliation affects the perception of organizational favoritism.

H_{2b}: The tendency towards normativity has an impact on the perception of organizational favoritism.

H_{2c}: Support tendency affects the perception of organizational favoritism.

H_{2d}: Development tendency has an impact on the perception of organizational favoritism.

H_{2e}: Hierarchy tendency affects the perception of organizational favoritism.

H₃: Organizational culture sub-dimensions (clan tendency, normative tendency, support tendency, development tendency, and hierarchical tendency) affect the perception of organizational justice.

H_{3a}: Clan tendency affects the perception of organizational justice.

H_{3b}: The tendency towards normativity has an impact on the perception of organizational justice.

H_{3c}: Support tendency affects the perception of organizational justice.

H_{3d}: Development tendency affects the perception of organizational justice.

H_{3e}: Hierarchy tendency affects the perception of organizational justice.

H₄: Leader-member exchange affects the perception of organizational justice.

H₅: Perception of organizational favoritism affects perception of organizational justice.

H₆: Leader-member exchange affects the perception of organizational favoritism.

H₇: Leader-member exchange has a mediating role in the effect of organizational culture sub-dimensions on organizational justice perception.

H₈: Perception of organizational favoritism has a mediating role in the effect of organizational culture sub-dimensions on perception of organizational justice.

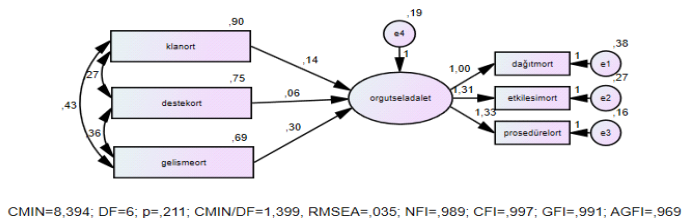
Results

Since data was collected using four different scales in the study, it was first examined whether there was “common method bias” or not. Harman's single factor test found the explained variance to be 20.608 (Podsakoff et al. 2003), and it was determined that there is no common method bias in the study.

Before testing the research model, the relationship between the influencing and affected variables of the model was examined using path analysis. According to the mediation analysis method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), when testing mediation models using structural equation modeling, the effect between the influencing and affected variables should first be examined. If such an effect exists, the mediating variables should be included in the model. If there is no relationship between the influencing and affected variables, then it is not possible to assert a mediating effect. If the effect between the influencing and affected variables disappears with the inclusion of the mediating variable, and if the effect between the variables is mediated through the mediating variable, then full mediation is present. If the effect between the influencing and affected variables persists, albeit at a reduced rate, and at the same time, part of this effect occurs through the mediating variable, then partial mediation is involved. When the partial mediation effect occurs through more than one mediating variable, it is called multiple partial mediation. Therefore, the relationships between the sub-dimensions of organizational culture—clan orientation, normative orientation, support orientation, growth orientation, and hierarchical orientation—and organizational justice were first examined using structural equation modeling.

Figure 4.

Significant Relationships in Path Analysis Between Organizational Culture Sub-Dimensions and Organizational Justice



In the path analysis tests examining the relationships between influencing and influenced variables, the sub-dimensions of organizational culture, normativeness, and hierarchicalness were removed from the model due to insignificant paths. The model and goodness-of-fit values for the path analysis are shown in Figure 4, and the analysis results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Post-Analysis Significant Paths in the Relationship between Organizational Culture Sub-Dimensions and Organizational Justice Perception

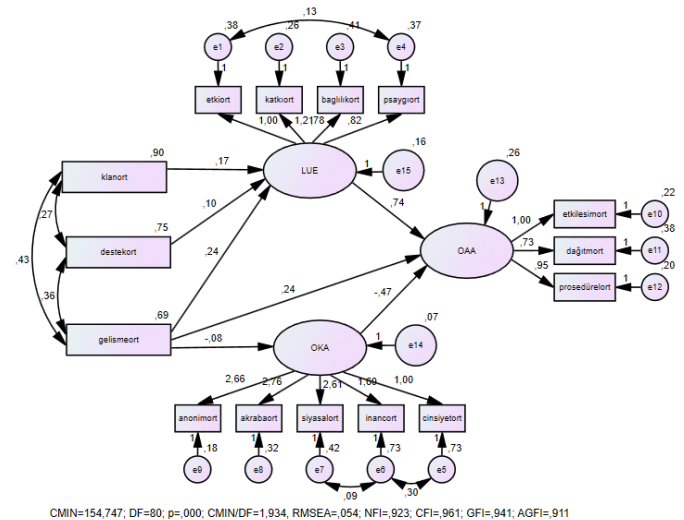
The Tested Road	Estimate (β)	Standard Error	Critical Value	Standardized Estimate (β)	Significance Level (p)
orgutseladalet←-klanort	0.139	0.035	3,964	0.231	***
orgutseladalet←-destekort	0.060	0.037	1,637	0.091	0.38
orgutseladalet←-gelismort	0.304	0.047	6,492	0.44	***

***p < .01

With the inclusion of the mediator variables of leader-member exchange and perception of organizational favoritism into the model, the final model of the research and the goodness-of-fit values of the model are given in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Research Model Significant Paths and Fit Index Values



For a clearer understanding of the model, the effects between variables (β coefficient) are summarized in Table 7.

As detailed above, the sub-dimensions of organizational culture—clan orientation, support orientation, and growth orientation—influence perceptions of organizational justice, while leader-member exchange has a full mediating effect between clan orientation, growth orientation, and perceptions of organizational justice. In the effect of growth orientation on perceptions of organizational justice, both leader-member exchange and perceptions of organizational favoritism have a partial mediating effect. To put it more clearly, path analyses conducted with the AMOS software package yielded β coefficients for three different effects: standardized direct, indirect, and total effects.

Table 7.

Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects Between Affecting and Affected Variables

Independent Variables	Dependant Variables								
	Leader- Member Interaction			Organizational Favoritism Perception			Perception of Organizational Justice		
	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Clan Tendency	0.302	-	0.302	-	-	-	-	0.158	0.158
Support Tendency	0.161	-	0.161	-	-	-	-	0.084	0.084
Development Tendency	0.363	-	0.363	-0.235	-	-0.235	0.252	0.227	0.479
Leader- Member Exchange	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.523	-	0.523
O. Favoritism Perception	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.160	-	-0.160

Direct Effects: In a direct effect, there are only two variables involved in the relationship between research variables, one being the influencer and the other being the influenced variable. The study first examined the relationship between the sub-dimensions of organizational culture, which are the affecting and affected variables, and the perception of organizational justice was examined through path analysis. The sub-dimensions of organizational culture, namely, normative orientation and hierarchical orientation, were found to have no significant effect on the perception of organizational justice and were removed from the model. However, the growth orientation (β : 0.440), support orientation (β : 0.091), and clan orientation (β : 0.231) were found to have a significant effect on the perception of organizational justice. Hypotheses H3a, H3c, and H3d were supported, while hypotheses H3b and H3e were not supported.

As expected, development tendency directly affects the perception of organizational favoritism (β : -0.235) negatively. Since no other sub-dimension of organizational culture other than development tendency significantly affects the perception of organizational favoritism, only H2d was supported, while hypotheses H2a, H2b, H2c, and H2e were not supported. The sub-dimensions of organizational culture, clan tendency (β : 0.302), support tendency (β : 0.161), and development tendency (β : 0.363), have a direct effect on leader-member exchange. In this case, hypotheses H1a, H1c, and H1d were supported, while hypotheses H1b and H1e were not supported.

With the inclusion of mediating variables in the model, it is observed that some of the significant paths established in the path analysis between the organizational culture sub-dimensions shown in Figure 4 and the perception of

organizational justice have disappeared or the coefficients of these paths have decreased. While the effect of the development trend on the perception of organizational justice in the model shown in Figure 4 was at the level of (β : 0.304), with the inclusion of mediating variables in the model, this direct effect decreased to the level of (β : 0.252).

The direct effect of the leader-member exchange variable on perception of organizational justice was (β : 0.523), and the effect of the perception of organizational favoritism was (β : 0.440). Therefore, hypotheses H4 and H5 were supported.

As shown in Table 7, leader-member exchange has no direct effect on the perception of organizational favoritism. This path was removed from the model because it was insignificant. Therefore, hypothesis H6 was not supported.

Indirect Effects: A direct effect is defined as the effect of one research variable affecting another, while an indirect effect is defined as the effect resulting from the complete or partial elimination of this effect by the intervening variables. An examination of the data in Table 7 reveals that clan orientation has an indirect effect on perceptions of organizational justice (β : 0.158), while the indirect effect of support orientation is (β : 0.084). However, the data in Table 6 reveal that the clan orientation dimension has an effect on organizational justice (β : 0.139), and the effect of support orientation is (β : 0.060). As previously stated, although the effect coefficients increased slightly with the inclusion of the mediating variables in the model, these direct paths were completely eliminated, and the effects of clan orientation and support orientation on perceptions of organizational justice became indirect, rather than direct. In this case, it was determined that leader-member interaction had a full mediating role in the effect of clan orientation and support tendency on the perception of organizational justice.

Another mediating effect identified as a result of the path analysis conducted is the indirect effect occurring through both leader-member exchange and through the perceptions of organizational favoritism, reducing the direct effect of growth orientation on perceptions of organizational justice. As can be seen in Table 6, growth orientation has a direct effect on perceptions of organizational justice. With the addition of mediating variables to this model, the direct effect decreases to β : 0.252, while the indirect effect is β : 0.227. To determine how much of the indirect effect is mediated through leader-member exchange and how much is mediated through perceptions of organizational favoritism, the

structural equation model was first removed from the path established through leader-member exchange to examine the indirect effect through perceptions of organizational favoritism. This process was then reversed to examine the mediating role of leader-member exchange in the effect of growth orientation on perceptions of organizational justice. According to the results, the indirect effect of growth orientation on perception of organizational justice through leader-member exchange was determined as β : 0.181, and the indirect effect of growth orientation on perception of organizational justice through perception of organizational favoritism was determined as β : 0.046. Accordingly, it was concluded that hypotheses H7 and H8 were partially supported.

Total Effects: When the total effects, expressed as the sum of the direct and indirect effects of a research variable on another research variable(s), are examined, it is observed that clan orientation (β : 0.302) and growth orientation (β : 0.363) strongly influence leader-member exchange. Among the influencing variables, only growth orientation (β : -0.235) affects perceptions of organizational favoritism. While the effects of organizational culture, clan orientation, and support orientation on perceptions of organizational justice are low, the total effect of growth orientation (β : 0.479) is considerably higher compared to the others. The highest total effect among the research variables is the effect of leader-member exchange (β : 0.523) on perceptions of organizational justice. Finally, the total effect of perception of organizational favoritism on perception of organizational justice was found to be (β : -0.160).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Given the diversity of sub-dimensions within organizational culture, along with the assumption that some dimensions may not exist at all within some organizations, led us to anticipate that addressing the concept of organizational culture at the sub-dimension level would allow for a more accurate assessment. Other variables were included in the analysis at the main dimension level. Including the sub-dimensions of organizational justice, organizational favoritism, and leader-member exchange in the study prevented the complexity that potential relationships and effects would create, thus ensuring that the research model remained simple and understandable.

The mediating variables of the study are leader-member exchange and perceptions of organizational favoritism. Within the framework of the organizational behavior literature, it is predicted that organizational culture influences both organizational favoritism and employee

interactions with leaders, and that these effects will influence employees' perceptions of organizational justice. The research model was designed based on this assumption.

The study primarily focused on the relationship between employees' perceptions of organizational culture and organizational justice. The relationship between organizational culture as the influencing variable and organizational justice perception as the affected variable was tested. This analysis investigated the effects of the sub-dimensions of organizational culture—prescriptive tendency, clan tendency, support tendency, growth tendency, and hierarchical tendency—on the perception of organizational justice. It was determined that clan, support, and growth tendencies positively influenced perceptions of organizational justice, while prescriptive tendency and hierarchical tendency do not have a statistically significant effect on perceptions of organizational justice.

Let's explain these effects, which are generally consistent with the organizational behavior literature and our research hypotheses:

The Türasaş Sivas Regional Directorate is an organization comprised of employees who have worked together for a long time and know each other and their organization well. As a public enterprise, it has a work environment characterized by low competition among employees, yet strong camaraderie and friendship among employees who have known each other for a long time. Employees' perception of their organization as a large family, and themselves as members of this family, fosters an organizational culture with a clan-like character. When employees view their managers as family elders and share their concerns and problems with them, this strengthens family ties within the organization and provides a warm working environment for employees. When employees know that their managers or colleagues will assist them with personal problems, they perceive the work environment as higher quality, more peaceful, and safer. They will engage in higher-quality interactions with their leaders, especially considering the influence of their managers in shaping this culture. Similarly, in organizations with a strong sense of support and development, employees experience higher leader-member interactions. The primary reason for this is that both leader-member exchange and supportiveness and developmental tendencies are leader- and organization-centered variables. In an organization where employees' personal rights and interests are respected and employees are included in the process of making work-related decisions, it is expected that the quality of employee interaction with their leaders

will be higher. Employees who are supported by their organizations in taking a reasonable amount of initiative, assuming responsibility, and sharing knowledge freely within the organization will have the opportunity to work within a flexible organizational structure and work in an environment that prioritizes innovation and development, which will enhance the quality of employee interaction with their leaders. Whether their managers provide training, courses, seminars, etc., related to their work or not, many behaviors such as contributing to the work and social life of employees through activities, providing employees with opportunities for promotion and building their own careers, ensuring the social and financial rights of employees, preparing work environments with occupational health and safety for employees, courteous behavior towards employees, allowing employees to share their experiences with other employees, being transparent and generous in rewarding employees, granting employees a reasonable amount of initiative in performing the work will positively affect the leader-member interaction of employees in organizational cultures that tend to support and develop.

When examining the correlation between clan, support, and development orientation and perception of organizational favoritism, it is observed that all sub-dimensions of organizational culture are negatively correlated with perception of organizational favoritism. However, in structural equation modeling, only the effect of development orientation on perception of organizational favoritism is negative and statistically significant. It is reasonable to assume that employees' perception of organizational favoritism in organizations with clan-type tendencies is statistically insignificant. In organizational structures where employees are viewed as family members, it is expected that favoritism behaviors are perceived at a low level. This is because, in clan-oriented organizations resembling a large family, managers, who can be identified as the heads of the family, will generally be assumed to be fair in their treatment of family members. Even if attitudes and behaviors to the contrary occur, this will be considered a necessary condition by employees, who are often viewed as family members, and will not be perceived as unfair. Similarly, no significant effect of support orientation on perception of organizational favoritism has been identified. Given the assumption that organizational support is standardized and distributed equally rather than being individualized, it seems reasonable that employees at the Türasaş Sivas Regional Directorate, a public economic enterprise, do not perceive organizational favoritism. Conversely, the assumption that

the impact of the growth trend on each employee will manifest differently may have made the impact of this trend on organizational favoritism more pronounced compared to others. Organizational cultures dominated by the growth trend tend to emphasize innovation, agility in seizing opportunities, a focus on quality, and a focus on being a leader rather than a follower in the market. Employees of developing organizations will also develop, beginning to consider the organization's position in the market alongside their own position within the organization. In organizations with a growth trend, as employees' contributions to the organization's development increase, both their interactions with their leaders and their perceptions of organizational favoritism will increase.

Another finding of the study is that leader-member exchanges do not have a statistically significant effect on organizational favoritism. This may be because, in an organizational culture characterized by clan, support, and development tendencies, employees are highly conscious of distinguishing their relationships with their leaders from organizational favoritism behaviors. In other words, employees may clearly understand which behaviors of their leaders are appropriate for organizational processes and the proper conduct of their work, and which behaviors constitute organizational favoritism, and they may not allow behaviors occurring within the framework of leader-member interactions to influence their perceptions of favoritism. At Türasaş, a public institution, where the jobs and duties assigned to employees are relatively static, while the organization and employee development are quite rapid, the emergence of such awareness among employees is considered an expected outcome. Indeed, Chaput (2012) argues that leader-member exchanges exhibit a relational structure that emerges as an in-group-out-group, suggesting that while there are similarities between the in-group and the perception of organizational favoritism, these two phenomena are quite distinct.

Another result of the structural equation model tested in the study is that both leader-member exchange and perceptions of organizational favoritism have a statistically significant effect on employees' perceptions of organizational justice. The effect of leader-member exchange on organizational justice is positive, and it has been found that as the interaction between leaders and members increases, employees' perceptions of organizational justice also increase positively. In other words, employees who develop close relationships with their leaders perceive the organization as more equitable. Studies that examined leader-member interaction and

perceptions of organizational justice together, such as Tülübaş (2021), Akın and Aksoy (2020), Tziner et al. (2015), Turgut et al. (2015), Gürpınar and Yahyagil (2007), and Scandura (1999) have reached similar conclusions. The perception of organizational favoritism also has a significant effect on the perception of organizational justice. This effect, as expected, is seen to be negative. A high perception of favoritism will naturally lead to a deterioration in employees' sense of justice. It's quite common for employees, especially those close to each other, such as family members, to experience greater disappointment than usual when they perceive favoritism within the organization and perceive it as unfair. Therefore, research results indicate that the impact of perceived organizational favoritism on perceived organizational justice is quite strong. This result is similar to studies by Cesur and Erol (2020), Altıntaş (2020), Burucuoğlu et al. (2015), Arslaner et al. (2014), Karaköse (2014), Polat and Kazak (2014), and Karacağözü and Yörük (2012).

Researchers for suggestions: The most important factors limiting the results of this study are the population and the sample. The research was conducted at the Sivas Regional Directorate of Türkiye Rail System Vehicles Industry Inc. (Türasaş). Due to time and budget constraints, the regional directorates in Eskişehir and Sakarya, other subsidiaries of Türasaş, were excluded from the study. Expanding this study to include all Türasaş regional directorates and applying it to other occupational groups would allow for generalization and comparison of the results.

In the research, a new measurement tool was developed to measure the perception of organizational favoritism, which includes the source (types) of favoritism behaviors. Following a pilot study, it was deemed appropriate to remove the dimension of citizen favoritism from the survey, resulting in a five-dimensional measurement. It is believed that using this measurement tool across different organizations and samples will contribute to research and researchers in measuring the perception of organizational favoritism.

Only quantitative data were used in the study. This may not fully reflect the feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of the respondents. It is believed that using both qualitative and quantitative methods in future studies could be beneficial for accurately interpreting the results.

The influencing, affected, and mediating variables used in this research model can be used within the same model framework in different samples to measure organizational justice perceptions. It is believed that by modifying the research model or its variables, different research

questions can be answered. Employees' perceptions of organizational justice are a complex variable with the potential to be influenced by dozens of different variables.

This study examines the extent to which influencing variables influence employees' perceptions of organizational justice. Determining which perceptions translate into behaviors and how is a crucial research question.

While numerous academic studies have been conducted within the framework of this research question, it is considered possible to add variables related to the transformation of perceptions into behaviors to the structural equation model used in this study.

Practitioners for suggestions: The organizational culture sub-dimensions in the model tested in the study were found to positively affect perceptions of organizational justice and leader-member exchange. Only the development trend negatively affected perceptions of organizational favoritism, and perceptions of organizational favoritism negatively affected perceptions of organizational justice. Within this framework, it is clear that employees must be treated fairly and equitably in all matters they associate with the organization.

The study found that an organizational culture characterized by a propensity for clan, support, and growth positively impacts employees' perceptions of organizational justice. Therefore, contributing to the development of organizational culture should be a priority for managers. Employees' mutual trust, affection, loyalty, and respect will foster a stronger sense of clan-like attachment. Managers' support for employees will contribute to the development of both employees and the organization, fostering collaborative success and team spirit, thus enhancing both individual happiness and peace of mind and, ultimately, individual and organizational performance.

Leader-member interaction strongly influences employees' perceptions of organizational justice, and it has been observed that employees evaluate organizational culture through their leaders' perceptions of justice. Arrangements should be made to strengthen employees' relationships with their leaders, the number of employees in the in-group should be increased as predicted by leader-member exchange theory, and efforts should be made to improve the quality of interaction between leaders and employees in both the in-group and out-group.

As organizational culture strengthens, employees' perceptions of organizational favoritism decrease; conversely, an increase in perceptions of organizational favoritism naturally leads to a decrease in perceptions of

organizational justice. Employees' ages, experience, competencies, personal characteristics, and positions differ from one another, and their contributions to the organization also differ. Employees in the same position but with different contributions to the organization enjoy the same rights based on their position. Since organizations cannot treat each employee differently, they should strive to equalize the contributions of these employees to the organization and help reduce the perceptions of favoritism among employees whose contributions to the organization are relatively homogeneous, thereby increasing their perceptions of organizational justice.

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The Effect of Organizational Culture on Perception of Organizational Justice: Mediating Role of Leader-Member Exchange and Perception of Organizational Favouritism

Örgüt Kültürünün Örgütsel Adalet Algısına Etkisi:
Lider-Üye Etkileşimi ve Örgütsel Kayırmacılık Algısının Aracılık Rolü

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the mediating role of leader-member exchange and perception of organizational favoritism in the impact of organizational culture sub-dimensions on perceptions of organizational justice. For this purpose, the research was conducted with the participation of 327 employees at the Tüasaş Sivas Regional Directorate. Structural equation modeling was used to test the hypotheses of the research model, which was constructed in accordance with the theoretical framework. The effects of organizational culture sub-dimensions on perceptions of organizational justice were examined as the main independent variables. It was found that clan orientation, supportive orientation, and growth orientation had positive and statistically significant effects on employees' perceptions of organizational justice, while normative orientation and hierarchical orientation had no effect on perceptions of organizational justice. With the inclusion of the mediating variables leader-member exchange and perception of organizational favoritism in the model, the direct effects of clan orientation and supportive orientation on perceptions of organizational justice were eliminated, and leader-member exchange assumed a full mediating role in this relationship. When examining the impact of growth orientation on perceptions of organizational justice, the mediating variables of leader-member exchange were found to have a positive and negative mediating role, both partially and jointly. The results indicate that an organization's cultural values are a significant factor in determining employees' perceptions of organizational justice. It was determined that employees' interactions with their leaders increase their perceptions of organizational justice, while perceived favoritism decreases their perceptions of organizational justice. The study's findings provide several recommendations for business managers and researchers.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Perception of Organizational Justice, Leader-Member Exchange, Organizational Favouritism

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı örgüt kültürü alt boyutlarının örgütsel adalet algısı üzerindeki etkisinde lider-üye etkileşimi ve örgütsel kayırmacılık algısının aracılık rolünü araştırmaktır. Bu amaçla araştırma, Tüasaş Sivas Bölge Müdürlüğü'nde toplam 327 personelin katılımı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Teorik altyapıya uygun bir şekilde kurgulanan araştırma modelinin hipotezlerini test etmek için yapısal eşitlik modellemesi kullanılmıştır. Temel bağımsız değişken olarak örgüt kültürü alt boyutlarının örgütsel adalet algısı üzerindeki etkisine bakılmış, klan eğilimi, destekleyicilik eğilimi ve gelişme eğiliminin çalışanların örgütsel adalet algıları üzerinde pozitif yönlü ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlı etkilere sahip olduğu, kuralcılık eğilimi ve hiyerarşi eğiliminin örgütsel adalet algısı üzerinde herhangi bir etkisinin olmadığı tespit edilmiştir. Aracı değişkenler olan lider-üye etkileşimi ve örgütsel kayırmacılık algısının modele dâhil edilmesiyle klan eğilimi ve destek eğiliminin örgütsel adalet algısı üzerindeki direkt etkisinin ortadan kalktığı, lider-üye etkileşiminin bu ilişkide tam aracılık rolü üstlenmiş olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Gelişme eğiliminin örgütsel adalet algısı üzerindeki etkisi incelendiğinde, aracı değişkenler olan lider-üye etkileşiminin pozitif ve örgütsel kayırmacılık algısının negatif yönlü olmak üzere birlikte ve kısmi aracılık rolü üstlendiği tespit edilmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlar örgütün kültürel değerlerinin çalışanların örgütsel adalet algısının belirlenmesinde önemli bir faktör olduğunu, çalışanların liderleriyle etkileşimlerinin örgütsel adalet algısını artırırken algıladıkları kayırmacılığın örgütsel adalet algılarını azalttığı saptanmıştır. Araştırmada ulaşılan sonuçlar çerçevesinde işletme yöneticilerine ve araştırmacılara yönelik çeşitli öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Örgüt Kültürü, Örgütsel Adalet Algısı, Lider-Üye Etkileşimi, Örgütsel Kayırmacılık

Introduction

As social beings, humans require many things, both physically and emotionally. Justice is one of the needs that ranks at the top of a person's emotional needs. In today's world, where resource scarcity is increasingly prevalent, the diversification and increase in human needs heighten the demand for justice and sensitivity towards ensuring and establishing justice. Justice is as important for organizations as it is for individuals. Under today's conditions, acquiring and retaining skilled blue-collar and white-collar workers imposes a significant cost burden on organizations. However, organizations that manage to retain qualified workers despite these costs gain a major competitive advantage. In the 21st century, organizations are considered a *"new living space" for employees* (Mumcu & Döven, 2016), and the importance of the organization for people, and of people for the organization, is increasing. If organizations want to survive long-term and achieve a competitive advantage, they must treat their employees fairly (Özyer & Azizoğlu, 2014, p. 97).

It can be said that many factors influence perceptions of organizational justice. According to Leung (2005, p. 556), organizational culture is a crucial factor in shaping the perception of organizational justice. Organizational culture, as an important factor shaping employees' perceptions of what the rules and criteria related to organizational justice are and how they should be applied, serves as a guide for employees' behavior within the organization. This study investigates the impact of organizational culture on organizational justice perceptions as an antecedent of employees' perceptions of organizational justice. It is believed that organizational culture, with its many different aspects, has the power to influence employees' perceptions of organizational justice. The relationships the organization establishes with its employees in terms of compliance with rules, sensitivity to the chain of command, viewing the organization as a family and employees as family members, supporting the individual development of employees, being tolerant of mistakes, and supporting new approaches and ideas may influence these employees' perceptions of organizational justice.

Many variables can be mentioned that influence the perception of organizational justice and are also influenced by organizational culture; in other words, these variables are predicted to mediate between these two variables. In this research, within the framework of the reviewed literature, it is thought that leader-member interaction and the perception of organizational favoritism may play a mediating role. While some of the topics studied within the organizational behavior literature are specific to certain

organizations, concepts such as organizational culture, perceived organizational justice, and leader-member exchange are concepts that exist in all organizations and affect every employee to a greater or lesser extent. As a matter of fact, there are many studies in the literature that examine the relationships between these concepts.

Leader-member exchange theory, unlike traditional leadership styles, is based on the assumption that the relationship a leader establishes with each subordinate is different and unique from others (Liden and Maslyn, 1998, p. 43). The leader has the power to influence the perception of organizational justice among all employees, especially regarding resource allocation, through the decisions he/she makes. When it is predicted that subordinates with whom the leader has a close relationship (in-group) will be more advantaged than others (out-group) in terms of utilizing organizational opportunities, a negative perception of justice may arise among employees.

Another concept hypothesized to influence employees' perceptions of organizational justice is the perception of organizational favoritism. Favoritism means "ensuring success by protecting, supporting, being benevolent, keeping someone at the expense of others or the business, providing unfair advantages, or favoring someone" (TDK Dictionary, 2011, p. 1364). Favoritist behavior in organizations is often perceived negatively by employees and leads to injustice among employees (Altıntaş, 2020, p. 65). Using organizational favoritism as a mediating variable in the relationship between organizational culture and the perception of organizational justice suggests that any type of organizational culture can increase organizational favoritism. Although there are very few studies on this subject, the majority of existing studies investigate the relationship between national culture and favoritism behaviors.

This study has two primary objectives. First, it is to test whether employees' perceptions of organizational justice are influenced by organizational culture. Second, it is to investigate whether leader-member exchange, which is predicted to contribute positively to organizational culture's impact on perceptions of organizational justice, and perceptions of organizational favoritism, which is predicted to contribute negatively, mediate the effect. Within this framework, the concepts used as research variables were first examined, and their relationships were demonstrated through case studies. Then, the research hypotheses were determined, and the relationships among organizational culture, perceptions of organizational justice, leader-member exchange, and perceptions of organizational favoritism were analyzed, delving into the

sub-dimensions of the variables.

Theoretical Background

In this part of the study, our research variables, namely organizational justice perception, organizational culture, leader-member exchange, and organizational favoritism perception, will be briefly explained.

Organizational Culture

It's inevitable for every organization to have a culture. Organizations are made up of people, and organizational culture is formed by the formal or informal interactions between individuals within the organization. Just as human communities have different cultures, different structures within a community can also have different cultures. The fundamental characteristic that distinguishes societies and systems from one another is their culture (Köse et al., 2001, p. 220).

According to Eren (2001, p. 136), organizational culture is *"a matter that reflects the characteristics of a community in the family, all institutions and organizations in society, nation and state and all formal and informal groupings and organizes its relations with its environment."* Organizational Culture, according to Moore (1985), is *"a set of shared meanings"*, according to Sathe (1983), it is *"beliefs and values shared by members of the organization"*, according to Trice and Beyer (1984), *"a network of meanings that includes values, norms and ideologies"*, according to Pettigrew (1979), *"a system of commonly shared meanings in any place, time and group"*, Smircich (1985) defines it as *"perceptions, meanings, beliefs and values shared by members of the organization"*, according to Kilmann et al. (1998), it is *"norms, attitudes, expectations, beliefs, assumptions, values, ideologies and values that bind a group together and are shared by the group"* (Şişman, 2011, p. 81).

Researchers analyzing organizational cultures have categorized organizations according to various cultural characteristics, resulting in the emergence of numerous organizational models and approaches. It's not surprising that so many models and approaches emerge regarding a concept like culture, which varies across societies. The Orientation Approach, developed by Danişman and Özgen (2003), which we will utilize in this research, is summarized below.

"Örgüt Kültürü Çalışmalarında Yöntem Tartışması: Niteliksel-Niceliksel Yöntem İkileminde Niceliksel Ölçümler ve Bir Ölçek Önerisi" by Danişman and Özgen (2003, pp. 91-124), the development process of the concept of organizational culture in the field of management

organization was investigated, the studies carried out to understand and measure the concept in its historical development were mentioned, and finally, the studies using quantitative criteria were summarized/grouped, and an organizational culture scale consisting of nine sub-dimensions was formed. This scale was preferred with the assumption that it is more suitable for Turkish organizational culture and can explain the organizational culture more strongly.

Researchers attempting to measure organizational culture using quantitative methods have focused on certain cultural elements, addressed their analyses at different levels, and defined different dimensions/typologies. The dimensions defined by Danişman and Özgen (2003, p. 104) are; "rule-following (bureaucracy/control) tendency, hierarchy tendency, outcome (process) orientation, clan (family and relationship) orientation, person (job orientation/supportive culture) orientation, team (individual/group work) orientation, development (flexibility/adaptability/stability/stagnation) orientation, professionalism (rationalism) orientation, and openness orientation."

Leader-Member Exchange

Leadership is defined as *"the process by which an individual influences and directs the activities of others to achieve specific personal or group goals under specific conditions"* (Koçel, 2014). For those who follow a leader, leadership is *"a person whom a group of people follow to achieve their own personal or group goals, acting in accordance with his wishes, orders, and instructions"* (Koçel, 2014, p. 668).

When investigating how a leader's characteristics and behaviors affect followers, the problem is often approached by *assuming that "subordinates are similar, and the leader will treat all subordinates the same way"* (House & Aditya, 1997, p. 446). However, contrary to this assumption, managers do not, or cannot, establish homogeneous relationships with all subordinates at the same level. In addition to workload and time constraints (Arıkan & Çalışkan, 2013, p. 3), relationships between leaders and subordinates are shaped by interactions that occur over time.

The most important feature of leader-member exchange theory is that, unlike classical approaches, it approaches the concept of leadership from a *"relationship-oriented"* perspective. In LMX theory, the focus is on the interrelationship between the leader and his/her subordinates, rather than the leader and his/her

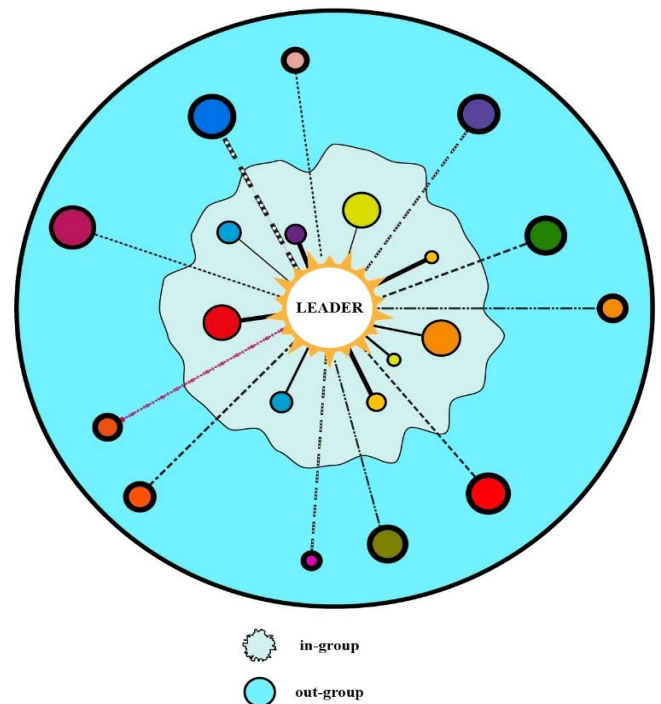
subordinates (Aslan & Özata, 2009, p. 98; Martin et al., 2005, p. 141; Case, 1998, p. 389).

The theory of leader-member exchange is based on the study conducted by Graen, Dansereau, and Minami (1972, p. 217) and two studies conducted by Dansereau, Cashman, and Graen (1973, pp. 187-190), which are a continuation of this study. In the first study, the "*Average Leadership Style (ALS)*" was developed, based on the assumption that the leader has an average management style and that leadership behaviors are stable. However, even if leaders treat all employees the same, the relationship that develops between each leader and their follower/employee/subordinate/member is different from the other. In the second study, the authors focused on the specific relationship between the leader and each follower and called these different relationships the "*Vertical Dyadic Linkage Model (VDL)*". This model, which brought a new perspective on leadership, focused on the interaction between the leader and the followers and has been termed "*Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX)*" in the literature (Dansereau et al., 1975, p.72).

Each vertical relationship between a leader and their followers is unique and distinct from the others. This is primarily due to leaders' time constraints and the criticality of subordinates' positions for both the organization and the leader. Leaders will spend more of their already limited time with subordinates in critical positions, thus interacting with them more and getting to know each other better (Karcioğlu & Kahya, 2011, pp. 339-340).

In the leader-member exchange model presented in Figure 1, as outlined in light of the studies summarized above, the leader is naturally at the center of the organization. The boundaries of the large outer circle represent the organization. There are two distinct clusters within the organization beyond the leader. The smaller circle with irregular boundaries, closer to the leader, represents the in-group, while the area outside the in-group represents the out-group. Subordinates in the in-group have closer bilateral relationships with the leader. The leader spends more time with them, supports them, rewards them, and ensures their participation in decision-making. Employees in the in-group, on the other hand, assume more responsibility, invest more effort and time, and thus increase individual and organizational output. This allows them to maintain uninterrupted communication and interaction with the leader.

Figure 1
Leader-Member Exchange Model



Individuals within an organization naturally have different structures and personalities from other employees due to their unique characteristics. Therefore, in Figure 1, each employee is represented in different colors and sizes. Different colors represent different employee characteristics, while different sizes represent different approaches to work and differences in their contributions to the organization. Furthermore, there are continuous and dashed lines of varying thicknesses connecting each employee to the leader, representing the interaction between the employee and the leader. This is due to the emphasis placed on the most important aspect of leader-member exchange theory: "*the leader's relationship with each employee must be distinct from that of others*". The lines within the in-group are solid, representing the continuity of the leader-member interaction, and are drawn at varying thicknesses to indicate the strength of this interaction. Similar considerations apply to out-group members. However, the out-group employees, who have low levels of interaction with the leader, who do not take responsibility for the organization beyond the formal and standard tasks required by their job, and who do not exert extra effort, are represented by dashed lines. Although employees are divided into two groups: the out-group and the in-group, this criterion may not be sufficiently descriptive of their closeness to the leader. For example, one employee in the same group might be closer to the leader than the other.

Or, even within the same group, employees might perceive leader-member interactions differently from others. Therefore, some employees are in the same group but closer to the leader at the center of the organization, while others are further away. There is no strong, clear boundary separating the in-group subordinates and the out-group subordinates. The irregular, thinly drawn boundaries between the two groups emphasize the permeability between them. Furthermore, the mere hue of the background colors serves to *"represent different informal groups within the same organization"*.

The leader and subordinates in the in-group trust each other more and interact more. The leader provides more support to subordinates in the in-group and rewards them more, both formally and informally. Their relationship with employees in the out-group is limited, characterized by less trust, less interaction, and reward. Almost all leaders quickly differentiate their subordinates by building relationships with them based on concepts such as trust, support, reward, and interaction. This differentiation is achieved very quickly and is not easily changed (Dienesch & Liden, 1986, p. 621). Toward subordinates in the in-group, the leader is more tolerant, creates an attractive environment for employees, strives to increase team spirit and individual enthusiasm, offers innovative solutions to problems, and strives to support employees in every way (Boerner et al., 2007, pp. 16-17). Subordinates in closer proximity to the leader have certain advantages stemming from being in the in-group. More organizational support, greater access to organizational resources and opportunities, career planning, and advancement are all advantages for subordinates. Similarly, leaders who interact with the in-group benefit from this interaction. Having employees who are wholeheartedly committed to their work, the orders and tasks given to them, and their organization, who work hard and go the extra mile, is a significant advantage for leaders. (Deluga & Perry, 1994, pp. 67-68). Subordinates in the out-group, on the other hand, mostly perform routine tasks within their own units. They have a more formal relationship with the management team (Liden & Graen, 1980, p. 452).

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995, p. 223) suggest that the leader-member exchange model consists of the dimensions of respect, trust, and loyalty. Dienesch and Liden (1986), after conducting a literature review on leadership, discussed the model's theoretical and methodological challenges. They argued that the leader-member exchange model has a multidimensional structure, suggesting that this measurement would be more accurate. They also suggested conceptualizing the leader-member exchange

model as a three-dimensional structure: *"impact", "contribution", and "loyalty"*. In addition to these three dimensions, Liden and Maslyn (1998) identified *"professional respect"* as another dimension of the leader-member exchange model and developed a four-dimensional structure.

Perceived Organizational Favoritism

Favoritism can be seen among individuals who are related to each other at every level of society. Many social relationships, such as kinship, friendship, intimacy, belonging to the same profession, sect, disposition, city, religion, religious order, neighborhood, and so on, bring people closer together and pave the way for favoritism (Kurtoğlu, 2012, p. 148; Özkanan & Erdem, 2015, p. 8). The social status of those who engage in favoritism, along with the nature and purpose of their favoritism, has led to a variety of different favoritism behaviors, and over time, these behaviors have been conceptualized.

Favor means *"ensuring success by protecting, keeping, favoring, keeping someone at the expense of others or the business, providing unfair advantages to someone, or granting favors"* (TDK Sözlüğü, 2011, s. 1364). Favoritism can be defined as *"deviation from rights and justice"* in favor of a group or community beyond the favorer and the favored (Erdem, 2010, p. 1). The concept of nepotism is used as *"favouritism"* in British English and *"favoritism"* in American English, and this concept is given the meaning of *"unfair support of a person or group by someone in authority"* (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2007, p. 457).

Researchers have generally examined favoritism from a managerial perspective, with definitions based on the assumption that superiors favor certain subordinates. For example, according to Argon (2016, p. 234), favoritism is *"the unfair and unlawful favoritism and support of relatives by an employee performing managerial duties"*. Although it causes numerous problems and disruptions within the system, favoritism, which has not yet been definitively resolved (Çakır, 2014, p. 18), appears in practices such as *"offering employment opportunities, promotions, training opportunities, compensation and rewards, and performance evaluation"*, which are among human resources activities (Çetinkaya et al., 2017, p. 124).

Favoritism is a phenomenon that exists across diverse social segments, arising from various relationships, affinities, or expectations. Because it exists across such a wide spectrum, it is difficult to clearly distinguish different types of favoritism and to classify them based on specific

characteristics. While often viewed as a negative behavior, favoritism, with its diverse types and intertwined nature, has been addressed by numerous researchers, resulting in a confusion of concepts in the literature.

The most comprehensive classification of types of favoritism was made by Özkanan and Erdem (2015), who first divided favoritism into two types: favoritism and ideological favoritism. Favoritism is related to the personalities of the individuals favored. In other words, it is related to "*who they are*". It is possible to speak of favoritism when the favored person is someone else's relative, relative, friend, or acquaintance. According to Aktan (1992, p. 31), the concepts of favoritism and favoritism are used interchangeably with favoritism. Favoritism manifests itself in the forms of nepotism, cronyism, tribalism, and fellow countrymanism.

Özkanan and Erdem's (2015) classification, ideological favoritism, the second dominant type of favoritism, is divided into two: "*political favoritism*" and "*hierocratic favoritism*". Political favoritism, in turn, is further subdivided into three categories: patronage, clientelism, and service favoritism. The source of ideological favoritism is not a matter of who a person is, but rather of their lifestyle and worldview, as well as their religious or political beliefs, ideals, and ideologies. Because of the intertwined nature of political and religious thoughts and ideals, ideological favoritism has given rise to concepts that are difficult to separate in both theory and practice.

Perceived Organizational Justice

The meaning attributed to the concept of justice is generally defined in dictionaries as "*compliance with the law*", implying that everything that complies with the law is also just. However, even the full and correct implementation of the law may not always ensure and establish justice. The multifaceted and multidimensional nature of the concept of justice not only renders the meanings attributed to it inadequate but also prevents the emergence of a consensus-based definition (Çeçen, 1993, p. 19). Because the concept of justice has a complex and intricate structure of meaning, it does not manifest in a single form or situation. Therefore, other concepts are needed when explaining or giving meaning to the concept. Concepts that explain the concept of justice and are often used in conjunction with it include *equality*, *freedom*, *conscience (equality)*, *benefit*, *resistance*, and *punishment* (Çeçen, 1993, pp. 42-66).

According to Ibn Khaldun, justice occurs when an individual who uses the benefits provided by society contributes to the society in which he lives within the framework of the benefits provided to him, and when the

elements of trust and balance are observed during the allocation of benefits between individuals and the individual's contribution to society (Sönmez, 2018, pp. 149-150).

When employees join an organization, they aim to achieve certain benefits in return for the effort they invest. Earning a gain as a result of physical or intellectual labor, and wanting to be fully compensated for the effort they put into achieving this gain, is quite a rational expectation for employees. Employees don't focus solely on their own gains. By comparing their own gains with those of other employees they refer to, they analyze whether the organization treats all its employees differently. This analysis is conducted through certain "*fairness criteria*" determined by employees themselves (Bağcı, 2013, p. 165).

The gains that employees aim to achieve in return for their efforts in the organization are mostly matters such as salary, wages, and promotion, which fall within the scope of the organization's human resources department. (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998, p. 1). Greenberg (1996, p. 24) defines organizational justice more generally and defines it as the "*perceived justice*" of employees regarding practices within the organization. Organizational justice, a high perception of justice among employees, helps these employees develop more positive attitudes and behaviors toward the organization and other employees (Anderson & Shinew, 2003, p. 229). Conversely, employees' concerns about justice can influence, and even change, their attitudes and behaviors toward the organization and their colleagues (Judge & Colquitt, 2004, p. 395).

An examination of the organizational justice literature reveals that organizational justice sub-dimensions are comprised of distributive justice, interactional justice, and one of the following: procedural justice or process justice. Researchers have sometimes used these concepts interchangeably, sometimes using procedural justice, process justice as a third dimension alongside distributive justice and interactional justice.

This third dimension, which creates confusion in academic studies, is called "*process justice*" in some studies (İçerli, 2010; Yıldız, 2014). Based on the work of Greenberg (1990), Niehoff and Moorman (1993) named this dimension as procedural justice, as stated by Thibaut and Walker, and classified this dimension into two sub-dimensions; "*formal processes and interactional justice*". *The concept of procedural justice has been used in most of the studies in the national literature* (İyigün, 2012; Mumcu, 2020; Mumcu & Döven, 2016; Özyer & Azizoğlu, 2014; Yıldız & Develi, 2018). In some studies, it is seen that the concept of "*Procedural justice*" is translated as process

justice (Karacaoğlu & Yörük, 2012; Polatçı & Yılmaz, 2018; Tutar, 2007).

Relationships Between Organizational Culture, Leader-Member Exchange Perception of Favoritism, and Organizational Justice: A Model Proposal

The literature review revealed no studies combining all four research variables. Only three studies correlated all three research variables or their sub-dimensions, and information about these studies is provided below.

Tziner et al. (2008), analyzed data from 75 participants working in a public organization in their study examining the mediating role of organizational culture in the impact of organizational justice on leader-member exchange and job performance. Their findings predicted that two dimensions of organizational culture, employee support and attention to detail, would influence both leader-member exchange and organizational justice. However, contrary to the theoretical model, two sub-dimensions of organizational culture were found to mediate the relationship between organizational justice and leader-member exchange.

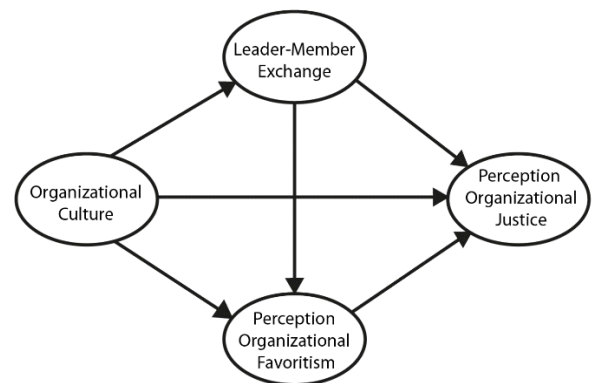
Erdogan et al. (2006) collected data from 516 teachers at 30 secondary schools in Istanbul using a survey. The findings of the analysis indicate that respect for people, a sub-dimension of organizational culture, has a positive effect on interactional justice on leader-member exchange, while team-oriented culture, another sub-dimension of organizational culture, harms this relationship. Regarding the moderating effect of distributive justice on leader-member exchange, the effect of aggressive culture on this relationship was found to decrease as the effect of team-oriented culture increases. Additionally, it was found that leader-member exchange is higher in schools with a team-oriented culture.

Erdogan (2002) proposed a model to theoretically identify the antecedents and consequences of employees' perceptions of organizational justice in performance evaluations. In the proposed model, procedural justice is first divided into two distinct dimensions: evaluative procedural justice and systemic procedural justice. The aim here is to separately identify the source and type of justice. He then argues that contextual factors such as perceived organizational support, organizational culture, and the quality of leader-member exchange are among the antecedents of employees' perceptions of justice.

A review of the literature on organizational culture, perception of favoritism, leader-member exchange, and organizational justice reveals that these concepts are included in theoretical and empirical studies as independent, dependent, and mediating variables. Employees' understanding and acceptance of organizational culture will improve the quality of their interactions with their leaders. Similarly, it is possible that practices shaped by organizational culture may lead to favoritism within the organization. As leader-member exchange increases, organizational justice will increase, while as perceptions of favoritism increase, perceptions of organizational justice will decrease. Based on these predictions, the model demonstrating the relationships and effects of these concepts is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Research Model



Materials and Methods

Purpose of Research

The aim of this study is to determine the effect of organizational culture, which is an important factor for employees in organizations, on organizational justice and to reveal the role of favoritism behaviors perceived by employees and the level of leader-member exchange in this relationship.

Population and Sample

TÜRASAS Sivas Regional Directorate employs 1292 people. Only 44 female employees work at the facility, and given that this facility can be classified as heavy industry, it is quite understandable that the proportion of female employees is so low. The percentage of employees with five years or less of experience is 6.04%. 6.5% of the

employees are primary or secondary school graduates, with the majority being high school graduates. The high school graduate rate is 67.49%, amounting to 872 people. 241 employees have graduated from undergraduate or graduate programs. Another striking statistic is the employee age. The percentage of employees under 30 (11.07%) (143 employees) is 41, and older (60.83%), making the majority of middle-aged employees at this company.

In the study, 650 survey forms were distributed to employees who had received occupational health and safety training, following a brief information presentation at the end of the training session, and 465 of these were returned. As a result of the data collection study conducted using convenience sampling, 138 of the 465 survey forms collected from respondents were excluded from the analysis because they lacked sufficient measurement capacity or information. A total of 327 survey forms were used for analysis. Information on the personnel who responded to the survey is presented in Table 1.

Data Collection

Organizational Culture Scale

The organizational culture scale used in this study is a short form organizational culture scale consisting of 6 dimensions and 24 statements, based on the scale developed by Danişman and Özgen (2003), which consists of 53 statements and 9 dimensions, and for which Şeşen (2010) conducted validity and reliability studies. The scale developed by Danişman and Özgen (2003) was derived from a study covering 17 companies operating in Turkey and Canada. The scale, which was used in another study by Danişman & Özgen (2008), confirms the 9-dimensional structure.

However, in another study by Kaya (2008), the organizational culture scale used was subjected to factor analysis, which resulted in the recommendation to reduce the number of dimensions in the original scale by combining the dimensions of supportiveness tendency, team tendency, and clan tendency under a single dimension. Şeşen (2010), following Kaya's suggestion, reorganized the scale into 6 dimensions and 24 items, finding the scale's total reliability coefficient/Cronbach Alpha to be 0.86.

In the research, confirmatory factor analysis was performed using a structural equation model to test the construct validity of the organizational culture scale. The first-level confirmatory factor analysis conducted on organizational culture revealed that the scale exhibited a five-factor distribution, differing from its original six-factor structure.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Employees Responding to the Survey Forms Used in the Research (Sample Statistics)

		Frequency	%
Gender	Woman	14	4.28
	Male	313	95.72
Total		327	100
Marital Status	Married	277	84.71
	Single	50	15.29
Total		327	100
Work Contract Type	Regular	253	77.37
	Subcontractor	74	22.63
Total		327	100
Age	19-30	58	17.74
	31-40	109	33.33
	41-50	114	34.86
	51 and above	46	14.07
Total		327	100
Staff Status	Employee	211	64.53
	Officer	116	35.47
Total		327	100
Work Experience	1-5 Years	43	13.15
	6-15 Years	114	34.86
	16-25 Years	107	32.72
	26 and Above	63	19.27
Total		327	100
Educational Status	Primary/ Secondary School	17	5.2
	High school	183	55.96
	Associate Degree	43	13.15
	Licence and Above	84	25.69
Total		327	100

All 4 statements belonging to the "openness" sub-dimension, 1 statement belonging to the "clan" sub-dimension, 1 statement belonging to the "rule" sub-dimension, 1 statement belonging to the "development" sub-dimension, one statement from the "hierarchy" sub-dimension, and two statements from the "support" sub-dimension, for a total of 10 statements, were excluded from the analysis. The analysis revealed that the statements belonging to these sub-dimensions were not fully understood by the respondents, and therefore, the factor loadings of the statements did not reach sufficient

levels. When we examine the statements regarding the exact measurement of the openness sub-dimension within the organizational culture scale, we see that it is defined as *"the degree to which the organization supports or discourages transparent and comfortable discussions and initiatives in resolving conflicts and problems within the organization"* (Danışman & Özgen, 2003, p. 106). The openness dimension was excluded from the analysis because it was believed that conflict and disagreements would be minimal in an organization where employee roles and responsibilities were clearly defined. The goodness-of-fit values for the final five-dimensional structure of the organizational culture scale are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Organizational Culture Scale CFA Goodness of Fit Values

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
Org. Culture Scale (5D)	124,134*	67	1,853	0.51	0.901	0.954	0.952	0.924

* $p < .01$

Organization culture 5D scale factor to its structure according to applied Cronbach Alpha internal coherence coefficient yielded the following results; 0.759 for the clan tendency dimension, 0.786 for the rule-following tendency dimension, 0.843 for the development tendency dimension, 0.755 for the hierarchy tendency dimension, 0.842 for the supportiveness tendency dimension, and finally, the cumulative Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the organizational culture scale was found to be 0.786. Based on the relevant data, it was concluded that the 5D structure of the organizational culture scale is valid and reliable.

Organizational Justice Scale

The organizational justice scale developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) was used to measure employees' perceptions of organizational justice in the study. The scale consists of three dimensions and 20 items. Adapted to Turkish by Yıldırım (2002) and tested for validity and reliability, the scale is frequently used in organizational justice studies (Yürür, 2018).

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the construct validity of the organizational justice perception scale, and it was determined that the scale retained its original three-dimensional, 20-item structure. Factor loadings for the sub-dimensions of the scale ranged from 0.644 to 0.823 for procedural justice, 0.644 to 0.779 for distributive justice, and 0.805 to 0.884 for interactional

justice. The goodness-of-fit values for the confirmatory factor analysis results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Organizational Justice Scale CFA Fit Goodness Results

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
ÖA Scale (3D)	344,213*	160	2,151	0.59	0.921	0.956	0.906	0.872

* $p < .01$

Confirmatory factor analysis results indicate that the statistical data belonging to the three-factor structure of the scale have good fit values. After the validity analysis, Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficients were calculated for the organizational justice scale and its subscales; showing that the procedural justice sub-dimension was 0.872, the distributive justice sub-dimension was 0.778, the interactional justice sub-dimension was 0.941, and the cumulative Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was 0.943, and it was decided that it was reliable.

Leader-Member Exchange Scale

Another scale used in this study was the Leader-Member Exchange Scale developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998). Liden & Maslyn (1998) added the *"professional respect"* dimension to the three-dimensional structure (influence, contribution, and loyalty) developed by Dienesch and Liden (1986), creating a scale with four dimensions and 12 items. The adaptation of the scale to Turkish and its validity and reliability were conducted by Baş et al. (2010). Cronbach's alpha coefficients, which indicate the internal consistency of the scale, were found to be 0.92 for the influence dimension, 0.70 for the contribution dimension, 0.86 for the loyalty dimension, and 0.90 for the professional respect dimension.

Confirmatory factor analysis conducted within the framework of research data related to the leader-member exchange scale revealed that the scale exhibited a distribution consistent with its original four-dimensional structure. Analyzing the factor loadings, the effect size ranged from 0.747 to 0.813, the contribution dimension from 0.540 to 0.839, the commitment dimension from 0.627 to 0.834, and the professional respect dimension from 0.747 to 0.757. The statistical data for the goodness-of-fit values obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis are shown in Table 4.

Accordingly, the goodness-of-fit values of the four-dimensional structure of the leader-member exchange scale were within acceptable limits, and the leader-member exchange scale was validated within the current

sample.

Table 4

CFA Goodness of Fit Results for the LMX Scale

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
LMX Scale (4 Dimensional)	107,802*	48	2,151	0.61	0.929	0.959	0.951	0.92

* $p < .01$

According to the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient analysis results, which were conducted to determine the reliability of the scale and its sub-dimensions, the effect dimension had a coefficient of 0.820, the contribution dimension 0.739, the commitment dimension 0.671, the professional respect dimension 0.795, and the cumulative leader-member exchange scale 0.807, indicating that the scale is reliable.

Organizational Favoritism Scale

The "*Organizational Favoritism Perception Scale (OFPS)*" used in the study, as previously mentioned, is the only original scale for this study. The purpose of using this original scale instead of scales used in the national literature is that the components that constitute favoritism behaviour, which have a rather complex structure, have not been clearly defined, and consequently, the scales purporting to measure favoritism have focused on only one point: "*At what stage of work life does favoritism occur?*"

This scale used in the study focuses on the reasons for the emergence of the concept of favoritism. The Organizational Favoritism Perception Scale (OFPS Scale), unlike the study by Asunakutlu and Avcı (2009), attempts to answer the question, "*If there is favoritism in a company, at what stage of work life does this behavior occur?*" (is it during recruitment, processing, or promotion?), rather than seeking an answer to the question, "*If there is favoritism in a company, what could be the reason for it?*".

For this purpose, national and international literature was reviewed within the context of the "*process of developing an original psychological measurement tool*" proposed by Seçer (2018), and it was found that the concept of favoritism occurs in a wide range of areas, both in social and professional life. To measure this behavior, which we frequently encounter in every aspect of life and in professional life, an item pool was created by examining the theoretical framework. The statements in the fifty-item pool were revised in consultation with four different experts in the field. Subsequently, two experts in test development in the social sciences reviewed the statements, and the number of statements was reduced to

29. A pilot study was conducted with this 29-item scale covering employees of the Türasaş Sivas Regional Directorate. It was decided to exclude statements related to "*fellow townsman favoritism*" from the scale for the purpose of this research because, although the Türasaş Sivas Regional Directorate is a public sector entity, almost all of its employees are from Sivas province. The development process of the OFP Scale was carried out by Günay and Özyer (2022) and was published as an article titled "*Validity and Reliability Analysis of the Organizational Favoritism Perception (OFP) Scale in the Context of Turkish Culture*".

According to the results of the exploratory factor analysis conducted for the OFP scale, five sub-dimensions consisting of 21 statements were formed, and the dimensions of favoritism toward friends and acquaintances and ingroup favoritism were combined into a single dimension and named the "anonymous/general favoritism dimension." The factor loadings of the five subdimensions in the scale were as follows: Kinship favoritism for 0.525-0.915, general favoritism for 0.543-0.856, political-ideological favoritism for 0.659-0.790, belief favoritism for 0.791-0.886, and for gender favoritism in the range of 0.761-0.869 detection has been done. Furthermore, the total variance explained by the original OFP scale was found to be 67.649%. Another analysis conducted to test the construct validity of the organizational favoritism perception scale was a confirmatory factor analysis. The first-level confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the distribution of factor loadings ranged from 0.624 to 0.824 for anonymous/public favoritism, 0.729 to 0.834 for religious favoritism, 0.680 to 0.873 for gender favoritism, 0.697 to 0.886 for political/ideological favoritism, and 0.654 to 0.866 for kin favoritism. The CFA goodness-of-fit values for the OFP scale are shown in Table 5, indicating that the scale has good fit index values.

Table 5

CFA Goodness of Fit Values of the OFP Scale

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
OFP Scale (5 Dimensional)	349,496*	177	1,975	0.55	0.905	0.957	0.912	0.886

* $p < .01$

Finally, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients for the ÖKA scale and its subscales were 0.833 for anonymous/ general favoritism, 0.845 for kinship favoritism, 0.821 for political/ideological favoritism, 0.854 for religious favoritism, and 0.845 for gender favoritism. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the entire scale was

calculated as 0.910.

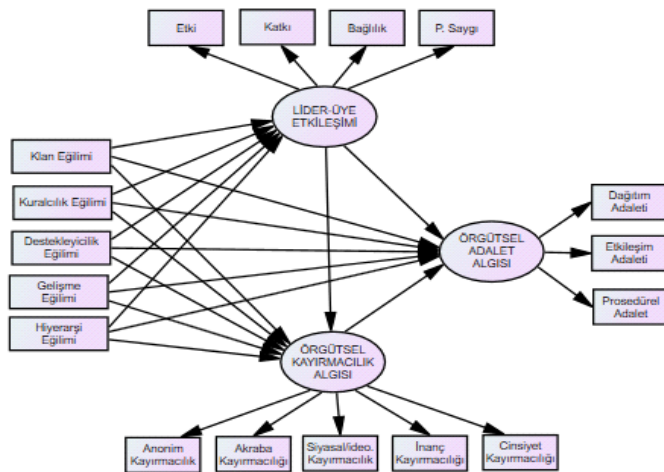
Research Model and Hypotheses

IBM SPSS 23.0 (IBM SPSS Corp., Armonk, NY, USA) and AMOS 23.0 software packages were used to analyze the research data. AMOS structural equation modeling was used to determine the estimated effects in the research model and to conduct validity analyses of the scales. Confirmatory factor analysis, structural regression (path analysis), and mediation analyses were conducted using the structural equation model.

The primary objective of this study is to determine the role of leader-member exchange and perceptions of organizational favoritism in the impact of organizational culture on employees' perceptions of organizational justice. The resulting model, when the dependent and independent variables of the study are presented at the dimension level, taking into account pilot study, exploratory factor analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis data, is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Detailed Statement of Research Dimensions



The research hypotheses put forward with the help of the model, including the research sub-dimensions in Figure 3, are given below.

H₁: Organizational culture sub-dimensions (clan tendency, normative tendency, support tendency, development tendency, and hierarchical tendency) have an impact on leader-member exchange.

H_{1a}: Clan affiliation has an effect on leader-member exchange.

H_{1b}: The tendency towards normativity has an impact on leader-member exchange.

H_{1c}: Supportiveness tendency has an effect on leader-member exchange.

H_{1d}: Growth tendency has an impact on leader-member exchange.

H_{1e}: Hierarchy tendency has an effect on leader-member exchange.

H₂: Organizational culture sub-dimensions (clan tendency, normative tendency, support tendency, development tendency, and hierarchical tendency) affect the perception of organizational favoritism.

H_{2a}: Clan affiliation affects the perception of organizational favoritism.

H_{2b}: The tendency towards normativity has an impact on the perception of organizational favoritism.

H_{2c}: Support tendency affects the perception of organizational favoritism.

H_{2d}: Development tendency has an impact on the perception of organizational favoritism.

H_{2e}: Hierarchy tendency affects the perception of organizational favoritism.

H₃: Organizational culture sub-dimensions (clan tendency, normative tendency, support tendency, development tendency, and hierarchical tendency) affect the perception of organizational justice.

H_{3a}: Clan tendency affects the perception of organizational justice.

H_{3b}: The tendency towards normativity has an impact on the perception of organizational justice.

H_{3c}: Support tendency affects the perception of organizational justice.

H_{3d}: Development tendency affects the perception of organizational justice.

H_{3e}: Hierarchy tendency affects the perception of organizational justice.

H₄: Leader-member exchange affects the perception of organizational justice.

H₅: Perception of organizational favoritism affects perception of organizational justice.

H₆: Leader-member exchange affects the perception of organizational favoritism.

H₇: Leader-member exchange has a mediating role in the effect of organizational culture sub-dimensions on organizational justice perception.

H₈: Perception of organizational favoritism has a mediating role in the effect of organizational culture sub-dimensions on perception of organizational justice.

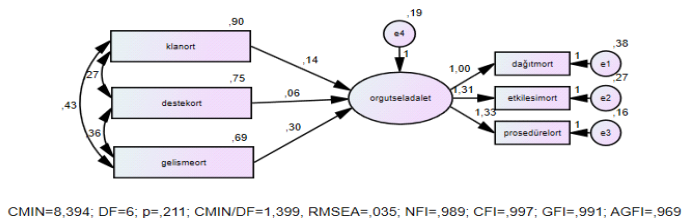
Results

Since data was collected using four different scales in the study, it was first examined whether there was “common method bias” or not. Harman's single factor test found the explained variance to be 20.608 (Podsakoff et al. 2003), and it was determined that there is no common method bias in the study.

Before testing the research model, the relationship between the influencing and affected variables of the model was examined using path analysis. According to the mediation analysis method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), when testing mediation models using structural equation modeling, the effect between the influencing and affected variables should first be examined. If such an effect exists, the mediating variables should be included in the model. If there is no relationship between the influencing and affected variables, then it is not possible to assert a mediating effect. If the effect between the influencing and affected variables disappears with the inclusion of the mediating variable, and if the effect between the variables is mediated through the mediating variable, then full mediation is present. If the effect between the influencing and affected variables persists, albeit at a reduced rate, and at the same time, part of this effect occurs through the mediating variable, then partial mediation is involved. When the partial mediation effect occurs through more than one mediating variable, it is called multiple partial mediation. Therefore, the relationships between the sub-dimensions of organizational culture—clan orientation, normative orientation, support orientation, growth orientation, and hierarchical orientation—and organizational justice were first examined using structural equation modeling.

Figure 4.

Significant Relationships in Path Analysis Between Organizational Culture Sub-Dimensions and Organizational Justice



In the path analysis tests examining the relationships between influencing and influenced variables, the sub-dimensions of organizational culture, normativeness, and hierarchicalness were removed from the model due to insignificant paths. The model and goodness-of-fit values for the path analysis are shown in Figure 4, and the analysis results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Post-Analysis Significant Paths in the Relationship between Organizational Culture Sub-Dimensions and Organizational Justice Perception

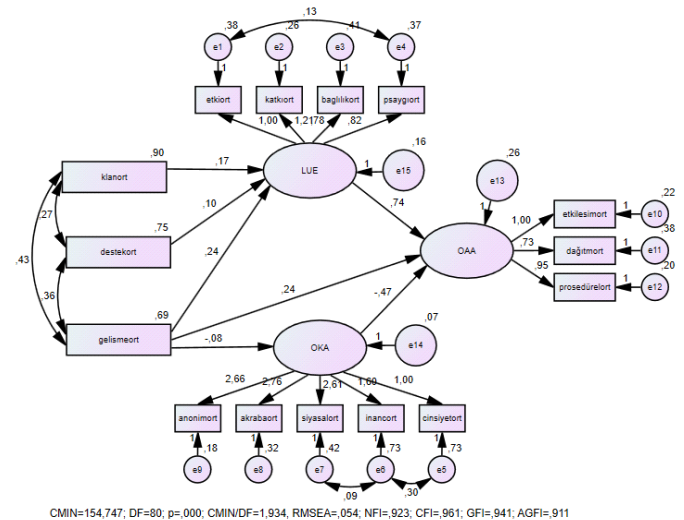
The Tested Road	Estimate (β)	Standard Error	Critical Value	Standardized Estimate (β)	Significance Level (p)
orgutseladalet←-klanort	0.139	0.035	3,964	0.231	***
orgutseladalet←-destekort	0.060	0.037	1,637	0.091	0.38
orgutseladalet←-gelismort	0.304	0.047	6,492	0.44	***

***p < .01

With the inclusion of the mediator variables of leader-member exchange and perception of organizational favoritism into the model, the final model of the research and the goodness-of-fit values of the model are given in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Research Model Significant Paths and Fit Index Values



For a clearer understanding of the model, the effects between variables (β coefficient) are summarized in Table 7.

As detailed above, the sub-dimensions of organizational culture—clan orientation, support orientation, and growth orientation—influence perceptions of organizational justice, while leader-member exchange has a full mediating effect between clan orientation, growth orientation, and perceptions of organizational justice. In the effect of growth orientation on perceptions of organizational justice, both leader-member exchange and perceptions of organizational favoritism have a partial mediating effect. To put it more clearly, path analyses conducted with the AMOS software package yielded β coefficients for three different effects: standardized direct, indirect, and total effects.

Table 7.

Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects Between Affecting and Affected Variables

Independent Variables	Dependant Variables								
	Leader- Member Interaction			Organizational Favoritism Perception			Perception of Organizational Justice		
	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Clan Tendency	0.302	-	0.302	-	-	-	-	0.158	0.158
Support Tendency	0.161	-	0.161	-	-	-	-	0.084	0.084
Development Tendency	0.363	-	0.363	-0.235	-	-0.235	0.252	0.227	0.479
Leader- Member Exchange	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.523	-	0.523
O. Favoritism Perception	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.160	-	-0.160

Direct Effects: In a direct effect, there are only two variables involved in the relationship between research variables, one being the influencer and the other being the influenced variable. The study first examined the relationship between the sub-dimensions of organizational culture, which are the affecting and affected variables, and the perception of organizational justice was examined through path analysis. The sub-dimensions of organizational culture, namely, normative orientation and hierarchical orientation, were found to have no significant effect on the perception of organizational justice and were removed from the model. However, the growth orientation (β : 0.440), support orientation (β : 0.091), and clan orientation (β : 0.231) were found to have a significant effect on the perception of organizational justice. Hypotheses H3a, H3c, and H3d were supported, while hypotheses H3b and H3e were not supported.

As expected, development tendency directly affects the perception of organizational favoritism (β : -0.235) negatively. Since no other sub-dimension of organizational culture other than development tendency significantly affects the perception of organizational favoritism, only H2d was supported, while hypotheses H2a, H2b, H2c, and H2e were not supported. The sub-dimensions of organizational culture, clan tendency (β : 0.302), support tendency (β : 0.161), and development tendency (β : 0.363), have a direct effect on leader-member exchange. In this case, hypotheses H1a, H1c, and H1d were supported, while hypotheses H1b and H1e were not supported.

With the inclusion of mediating variables in the model, it is observed that some of the significant paths established in the path analysis between the organizational culture sub-dimensions shown in Figure 4 and the perception of

organizational justice have disappeared or the coefficients of these paths have decreased. While the effect of the development trend on the perception of organizational justice in the model shown in Figure 4 was at the level of (β : 0.304), with the inclusion of mediating variables in the model, this direct effect decreased to the level of (β : 0.252).

The direct effect of the leader-member exchange variable on perception of organizational justice was (β : 0.523), and the effect of the perception of organizational favoritism was (β : 0.440). Therefore, hypotheses H4 and H5 were supported.

As shown in Table 7, leader-member exchange has no direct effect on the perception of organizational favoritism. This path was removed from the model because it was insignificant. Therefore, hypothesis H6 was not supported.

Indirect Effects: A direct effect is defined as the effect of one research variable affecting another, while an indirect effect is defined as the effect resulting from the complete or partial elimination of this effect by the intervening variables. An examination of the data in Table 7 reveals that clan orientation has an indirect effect on perceptions of organizational justice (β : 0.158), while the indirect effect of support orientation is (β : 0.084). However, the data in Table 6 reveal that the clan orientation dimension has an effect on organizational justice (β : 0.139), and the effect of support orientation is (β : 0.060). As previously stated, although the effect coefficients increased slightly with the inclusion of the mediating variables in the model, these direct paths were completely eliminated, and the effects of clan orientation and support orientation on perceptions of organizational justice became indirect, rather than direct. In this case, it was determined that leader-member interaction had a full mediating role in the effect of clan orientation and support tendency on the perception of organizational justice.

Another mediating effect identified as a result of the path analysis conducted is the indirect effect occurring through both leader-member exchange and through the perceptions of organizational favoritism, reducing the direct effect of growth orientation on perceptions of organizational justice. As can be seen in Table 6, growth orientation has a direct effect on perceptions of organizational justice. With the addition of mediating variables to this model, the direct effect decreases to β : 0.252, while the indirect effect is β : 0.227. To determine how much of the indirect effect is mediated through leader-member exchange and how much is mediated through perceptions of organizational favoritism, the

structural equation model was first removed from the path established through leader-member exchange to examine the indirect effect through perceptions of organizational favoritism. This process was then reversed to examine the mediating role of leader-member exchange in the effect of growth orientation on perceptions of organizational justice. According to the results, the indirect effect of growth orientation on perception of organizational justice through leader-member exchange was determined as β : 0.181, and the indirect effect of growth orientation on perception of organizational justice through perception of organizational favoritism was determined as β : 0.046. Accordingly, it was concluded that hypotheses H7 and H8 were partially supported.

Total Effects: When the total effects, expressed as the sum of the direct and indirect effects of a research variable on another research variable(s), are examined, it is observed that clan orientation (β : 0.302) and growth orientation (β : 0.363) strongly influence leader-member exchange. Among the influencing variables, only growth orientation (β : -0.235) affects perceptions of organizational favoritism. While the effects of organizational culture, clan orientation, and support orientation on perceptions of organizational justice are low, the total effect of growth orientation (β : 0.479) is considerably higher compared to the others. The highest total effect among the research variables is the effect of leader-member exchange (β : 0.523) on perceptions of organizational justice. Finally, the total effect of perception of organizational favoritism on perception of organizational justice was found to be (β : -0.160).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Given the diversity of sub-dimensions within organizational culture, along with the assumption that some dimensions may not exist at all within some organizations, led us to anticipate that addressing the concept of organizational culture at the sub-dimension level would allow for a more accurate assessment. Other variables were included in the analysis at the main dimension level. Including the sub-dimensions of organizational justice, organizational favoritism, and leader-member exchange in the study prevented the complexity that potential relationships and effects would create, thus ensuring that the research model remained simple and understandable.

The mediating variables of the study are leader-member exchange and perceptions of organizational favoritism. Within the framework of the organizational behavior literature, it is predicted that organizational culture influences both organizational favoritism and employee

interactions with leaders, and that these effects will influence employees' perceptions of organizational justice. The research model was designed based on this assumption.

The study primarily focused on the relationship between employees' perceptions of organizational culture and organizational justice. The relationship between organizational culture as the influencing variable and organizational justice perception as the affected variable was tested. This analysis investigated the effects of the sub-dimensions of organizational culture—prescriptive tendency, clan tendency, support tendency, growth tendency, and hierarchical tendency—on the perception of organizational justice. It was determined that clan, support, and growth tendencies positively influenced perceptions of organizational justice, while prescriptive tendency and hierarchical tendency do not have a statistically significant effect on perceptions of organizational justice.

Let's explain these effects, which are generally consistent with the organizational behavior literature and our research hypotheses:

The Türasaş Sivas Regional Directorate is an organization comprised of employees who have worked together for a long time and know each other and their organization well. As a public enterprise, it has a work environment characterized by low competition among employees, yet strong camaraderie and friendship among employees who have known each other for a long time. Employees' perception of their organization as a large family, and themselves as members of this family, fosters an organizational culture with a clan-like character. When employees view their managers as family elders and share their concerns and problems with them, this strengthens family ties within the organization and provides a warm working environment for employees. When employees know that their managers or colleagues will assist them with personal problems, they perceive the work environment as higher quality, more peaceful, and safer. They will engage in higher-quality interactions with their leaders, especially considering the influence of their managers in shaping this culture. Similarly, in organizations with a strong sense of support and development, employees experience higher leader-member interactions. The primary reason for this is that both leader-member exchange and supportiveness and developmental tendencies are leader- and organization-centered variables. In an organization where employees' personal rights and interests are respected and employees are included in the process of making work-related decisions, it is expected that the quality of employee interaction with their leaders

will be higher. Employees who are supported by their organizations in taking a reasonable amount of initiative, assuming responsibility, and sharing knowledge freely within the organization will have the opportunity to work within a flexible organizational structure and work in an environment that prioritizes innovation and development, which will enhance the quality of employee interaction with their leaders. Whether their managers provide training, courses, seminars, etc., related to their work or not, many behaviors such as contributing to the work and social life of employees through activities, providing employees with opportunities for promotion and building their own careers, ensuring the social and financial rights of employees, preparing work environments with occupational health and safety for employees, courteous behavior towards employees, allowing employees to share their experiences with other employees, being transparent and generous in rewarding employees, granting employees a reasonable amount of initiative in performing the work will positively affect the leader-member interaction of employees in organizational cultures that tend to support and develop.

When examining the correlation between clan, support, and development orientation and perception of organizational favoritism, it is observed that all sub-dimensions of organizational culture are negatively correlated with perception of organizational favoritism. However, in structural equation modeling, only the effect of development orientation on perception of organizational favoritism is negative and statistically significant. It is reasonable to assume that employees' perception of organizational favoritism in organizations with clan-type tendencies is statistically insignificant. In organizational structures where employees are viewed as family members, it is expected that favoritism behaviors are perceived at a low level. This is because, in clan-oriented organizations resembling a large family, managers, who can be identified as the heads of the family, will generally be assumed to be fair in their treatment of family members. Even if attitudes and behaviors to the contrary occur, this will be considered a necessary condition by employees, who are often viewed as family members, and will not be perceived as unfair. Similarly, no significant effect of support orientation on perception of organizational favoritism has been identified. Given the assumption that organizational support is standardized and distributed equally rather than being individualized, it seems reasonable that employees at the Türasaş Sivas Regional Directorate, a public economic enterprise, do not perceive organizational favoritism. Conversely, the assumption that

the impact of the growth trend on each employee will manifest differently may have made the impact of this trend on organizational favoritism more pronounced compared to others. Organizational cultures dominated by the growth trend tend to emphasize innovation, agility in seizing opportunities, a focus on quality, and a focus on being a leader rather than a follower in the market. Employees of developing organizations will also develop, beginning to consider the organization's position in the market alongside their own position within the organization. In organizations with a growth trend, as employees' contributions to the organization's development increase, both their interactions with their leaders and their perceptions of organizational favoritism will increase.

Another finding of the study is that leader-member exchanges do not have a statistically significant effect on organizational favoritism. This may be because, in an organizational culture characterized by clan, support, and development tendencies, employees are highly conscious of distinguishing their relationships with their leaders from organizational favoritism behaviors. In other words, employees may clearly understand which behaviors of their leaders are appropriate for organizational processes and the proper conduct of their work, and which behaviors constitute organizational favoritism, and they may not allow behaviors occurring within the framework of leader-member interactions to influence their perceptions of favoritism. At Türasaş, a public institution, where the jobs and duties assigned to employees are relatively static, while the organization and employee development are quite rapid, the emergence of such awareness among employees is considered an expected outcome. Indeed, Chaput (2012) argues that leader-member exchanges exhibit a relational structure that emerges as an in-group-out-group, suggesting that while there are similarities between the in-group and the perception of organizational favoritism, these two phenomena are quite distinct.

Another result of the structural equation model tested in the study is that both leader-member exchange and perceptions of organizational favoritism have a statistically significant effect on employees' perceptions of organizational justice. The effect of leader-member exchange on organizational justice is positive, and it has been found that as the interaction between leaders and members increases, employees' perceptions of organizational justice also increase positively. In other words, employees who develop close relationships with their leaders perceive the organization as more equitable. Studies that examined leader-member interaction and

perceptions of organizational justice together, such as Tülübaş (2021), Akın and Aksoy (2020), Tziner et al. (2015), Turgut et al. (2015), Gürpınar and Yahyagil (2007), and Scandura (1999) have reached similar conclusions. The perception of organizational favoritism also has a significant effect on the perception of organizational justice. This effect, as expected, is seen to be negative. A high perception of favoritism will naturally lead to a deterioration in employees' sense of justice. It's quite common for employees, especially those close to each other, such as family members, to experience greater disappointment than usual when they perceive favoritism within the organization and perceive it as unfair. Therefore, research results indicate that the impact of perceived organizational favoritism on perceived organizational justice is quite strong. This result is similar to studies by Cesur and Erol (2020), Altıntaş (2020), Burucuoğlu et al. (2015), Arslaner et al. (2014), Karaköse (2014), Polat and Kazak (2014), and Karacağözü and Yörük (2012).

Researchers for suggestions: The most important factors limiting the results of this study are the population and the sample. The research was conducted at the Sivas Regional Directorate of Türkiye Rail System Vehicles Industry Inc. (Türasaş). Due to time and budget constraints, the regional directorates in Eskişehir and Sakarya, other subsidiaries of Türasaş, were excluded from the study. Expanding this study to include all Türasaş regional directorates and applying it to other occupational groups would allow for generalization and comparison of the results.

In the research, a new measurement tool was developed to measure the perception of organizational favoritism, which includes the source (types) of favoritism behaviors. Following a pilot study, it was deemed appropriate to remove the dimension of citizen favoritism from the survey, resulting in a five-dimensional measurement. It is believed that using this measurement tool across different organizations and samples will contribute to research and researchers in measuring the perception of organizational favoritism.

Only quantitative data were used in the study. This may not fully reflect the feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of the respondents. It is believed that using both qualitative and quantitative methods in future studies could be beneficial for accurately interpreting the results.

The influencing, affected, and mediating variables used in this research model can be used within the same model framework in different samples to measure organizational justice perceptions. It is believed that by modifying the research model or its variables, different research

questions can be answered. Employees' perceptions of organizational justice are a complex variable with the potential to be influenced by dozens of different variables.

This study examines the extent to which influencing variables influence employees' perceptions of organizational justice. Determining which perceptions translate into behaviors and how is a crucial research question.

While numerous academic studies have been conducted within the framework of this research question, it is considered possible to add variables related to the transformation of perceptions into behaviors to the structural equation model used in this study.

Practitioners for suggestions: The organizational culture sub-dimensions in the model tested in the study were found to positively affect perceptions of organizational justice and leader-member exchange. Only the development trend negatively affected perceptions of organizational favoritism, and perceptions of organizational favoritism negatively affected perceptions of organizational justice. Within this framework, it is clear that employees must be treated fairly and equitably in all matters they associate with the organization.

The study found that an organizational culture characterized by a propensity for clan, support, and growth positively impacts employees' perceptions of organizational justice. Therefore, contributing to the development of organizational culture should be a priority for managers. Employees' mutual trust, affection, loyalty, and respect will foster a stronger sense of clan-like attachment. Managers' support for employees will contribute to the development of both employees and the organization, fostering collaborative success and team spirit, thus enhancing both individual happiness and peace of mind and, ultimately, individual and organizational performance.

Leader-member interaction strongly influences employees' perceptions of organizational justice, and it has been observed that employees evaluate organizational culture through their leaders' perceptions of justice. Arrangements should be made to strengthen employees' relationships with their leaders, the number of employees in the in-group should be increased as predicted by leader-member exchange theory, and efforts should be made to improve the quality of interaction between leaders and employees in both the in-group and out-group.

As organizational culture strengthens, employees' perceptions of organizational favoritism decrease; conversely, an increase in perceptions of organizational favoritism naturally leads to a decrease in perceptions of

organizational justice. Employees' ages, experience, competencies, personal characteristics, and positions differ from one another, and their contributions to the organization also differ. Employees in the same position but with different contributions to the organization enjoy the same rights based on their position. Since organizations cannot treat each employee differently, they should strive to equalize the contributions of these employees to the organization and help reduce the perceptions of favoritism among employees whose contributions to the organization are relatively homogeneous, thereby increasing their perceptions of organizational justice.

Etik Komite Onayı: Bu araştırma Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi'nde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yazar, düşük risk nedeniyle etik onay gerekmediğini ve bu araştırma boyunca gerekli tüm etik prosedürleri dikkatle takip ettiğini beyan etmiştir. Veriler Türasaş'ın -O dönemdeki adı Tüdemtaş A.Ş. 03.05.2018 tarihli 79554205-639-E.7662 sayılı izni ile 2019 Mart-Nisan aylarında toplanmıştır.

Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.

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Ethics Committee Approval: This research was conducted at the Sivas Cumhuriyet University. The author declared that ethical approval was not required due to low risk and that she carefully followed all necessary ethical procedures throughout the course of this research. The data were collected in March-April 2019 with the permission of Türasaş - its name at that time was Tüdemtaş A.Ş., dated 03.05.2018 and numbered 79554205-639-E.7662.

Informed Consent: Verbal consent was obtained from all the participants.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest: The author have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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