

## ***The Relationships Between Organizational Emotional Memory, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Performance***

*Örgütsel Duygusal Hafıza ile Örgütsel Bağlılık ve Örgüt Performansı İlişkisi*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Organizational emotional memory has attracted many researchers, and positive consequences of organizational outcomes has been revealed empirically. Specifically, the effect of organizational emotional memory on new product development and firm innovativeness has been investigated. However, the relationship among organizational emotional memory, organizational commitment and organizational performance is missing. In this study, I tested the interrelationship among organizational emotional memory, organizational commitment and organizational performance empirically. By studying 600 employees from private lenders' branches in Istanbul, I found that organizational emotional memory influences organizational commitment and performance positively. I also found that organizational commitment and organizational performance is positively related.

**Keywords:** Organizational Emotional Memory, Organizational Memory, Organizational Commitment, Organizational Performance

### **Öz**

Örgütlerde, duygusal hafızanın oluşturulması ve paydaşlar arasında yayılması örgütsel bağlılığı ve örgüt performansını etkilemektedir. Literatürde örgütsel duygusal hafızanın alt bileşenlerinin ve bu bileşenlerin firma yenilikçiliğine etkisinin incelenmesine yönelik çalışmalar bulunmaktadır. Ancak; örgütsel duygusal hafıza, örgütsel bağlılık ve örgüt performansı arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesine yönelik bir çalışma mevcut değildir. Bu çalışmada; örgütsel duygusal hafıza, örgütsel bağlılık ve örgüt performansı arasındaki ilişkiler ampirik olarak test edilmiştir. Araştırma, özel bankaların İstanbul ilinde bulunan şube personelinden oluşan 600 kişilik bir örneklem üzerinde 2018 yılında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın sonucunda: 1) örgütsel bağlılık ve örgüt performansının pozitif ilişkili olduğu, 2) örgütsel duygusal hafıza ve örgütsel bağlılığın pozitif ilişkili olduğu, 3) örgütsel duygusal hafıza ve örgüt performansının pozitif ilişkili olduğu ortaya konmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Örgütsel Duygusal Hafıza, Örgütsel Hafıza, Örgütsel Bağlılık, Örgüt Performansı

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## 1. Introduction

Organizational memory and, more specifically organizational emotional memory, are recently popular concepts that have attracted many researchers in the field of organizational sciences (Ebbers and Wijnberg, 2009; Rowlinson et al., 2009; Anderson, 2010; Anteby and Molnar, 2012; Holan, 2011). Organizational memory is thought to consist of two sub-components of declarative memory, which is directly related to facts and events, and procedural memory, which is related to routines and procedures (Lum et al., 2012). More particularly, declarative memory is the knowledge of what, why and when some facts or events happened, while procedural memory is the knowledge of these facts or events happened (Schneider et al., 2013). In practice, declarative memory enables organizations to analyze problems and to use the information produced through those analysis in solving those problems in question (Schein, 2009; Cameron and Quinn, 2011; Büschgens, 2013). Procedural memory, meanwhile, lets organizations to speed up organizational procedures (Girard, 2009; Cote, 2014).

Organizational emotional memory, on the other hand, refers to the storage of past emotional experiences and events within organizations (Love and Singh, 2010; Ashforth, 2011; Argote, 2012; Sanchez-Burks et al., 2016). Akgun et al. (2012) identified level, dispersion, vividness, clarity and storage as the main dimensions of organization emotional memory. The level of organizational memory represents the amount of the organizational memory stored in an organization while dispersion of the organizational memory refers to the dissemination of an organization's emotional memory across stakeholders and clarity of the organizational memory shows how well an organization's emotional memory has been absorbed by stakeholders.

Akgun et al. (2012) also showed that emotional experience storage influences organizational declarative and procedural memory, emotional experience dispersion impacts organizational procedural memory, and emotional experience level affects the organizational declarative and

procedural memory to the extent that emotional experience vividness or clearance increases. Also according to Akgun et al. (2012), dispersion of organizational emotional memory has a direct impact on firm innovativeness. Other researchers such as Cote (2014) and Holan (2011) also showed that organizational memory helps organizations transmit their know-how to the next personnel generations, and, as a result, enhance input efficiency as well as effectiveness of organizational decision-making procedures while creating a common perception among stakeholders. Enhanced efficiency and effectiveness would positively affect organizational performance (Burney et al., 2009; Brinckman et al., 2010; Striteska, 2012; Colquitt et al., 2016). Alvesson (2013) also showed that improvement in organizational emotional memory would also positively affect organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment, which has been a popular concept since 1960s, is currently seen as having a direct impact on stakeholders' individual performances, and, as a result, on organizational performance (Snape and Redman, 2010; Kim and Brymer, 2011; Hofstede, 2015). In the current harsh competition era, measuring and managing organizational performance is vital for organizations, and commitment of stakeholders

to the organizational targets emerges as a must to achieve them (Kaplan et al., 2010; Ashfort et al., 2011; Aten and Howard-Grenville, 2010; Bird and Wang, 2013).

This research targeted to investigate the relationship among organizational emotional memory, organizational commitment and organizational performance. Past research has shown the relationship between organizational emotional memory and firm innovativeness (Akgun et al., 2012), and also many researchers showed interest in investigating the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational performance albeit in individual scale (Beer., 2009; Colquitt et al., 2016; Katsikea et al., 2011; Meyer and Maltin, 2010; Shepherd et al., 2011; Vandenberghe, 2011). However, the literature was lacking a direct perspective in investigating the relationship among organizational emotional memory, organizational commitment and organizational performance. This research also targeted to fill in this gap in the literature as well as to provide a scientific ground for organizations to get awaken the importance of organizational emotional memory and organizational performance in performance improvement policies. To this end, this article primarily evaluates the relationship between organizational emotional memory and organizational commitment, and then the relationship between organizational emotional memory and organizational performance along with the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational performance were attempted to be identified.

## 2. Methodology

In this research, a cross-sectional and descriptive research methodology was developed with the aim of measuring the current levels of organizational emotional memory, organizational commitment and organizational performance in Turkish lenders and identifying the relationships of these variables among each other. To this end, a total of six hypothesis were developed based on the past literature:

In the current world context, commitment of stakeholders to organizations are seen to have a direct impact on their individual performance. Organizations require committed stakeholders in order to survive under the current harsh competition environment (Beer., 2009; Colquitt et al., 2016; Katsikea et al., 2011; Meyer, 2010; Shepherd et al., 2011; Vandenberghe, 2011). At organizational level, it could also be assumed that organizational commitment would have a positive impact on organizational performance.

**H1:** Organizational commitment (OC) is positively related to organizational performance (OP).

The existence of organizational emotional memory is assumed to have a positive impact on organizational performance since human resource management policies, such as supporting individual or collective learning processes, spreading knowledge, enhancing access to knowledge storage units, helping interpretation of information, to be employed with the aim of creating or improving organizational emotional memory would also help improve organizational efficiency and performance (Bagozzi, 1999; Akgun et al., 2009; Akgun et al., 2012; Akgun et al., 2012a; Bowen, 2014; Bradley, 2014).

**H2:** Organizational emotional memory level (OEML) is positively related to organizational performance.

**H3:** Organizational emotional memory dispersion (OEMD) is positively related to organizational performance.

**H4:** Organizational emotional memory clarity (OEMC) is positively related to organizational performance.

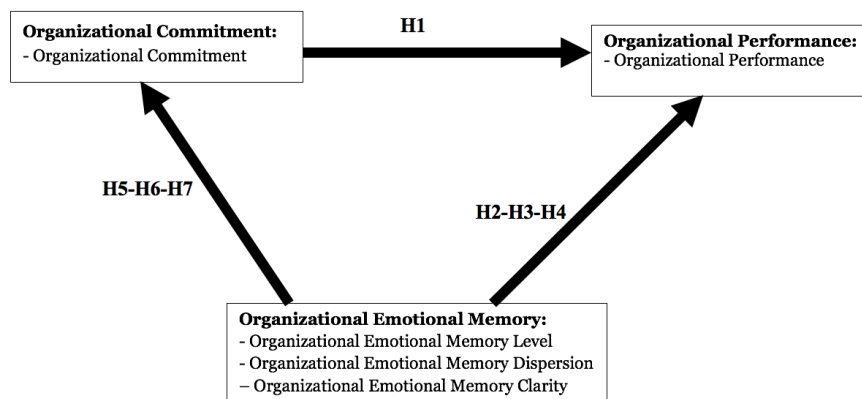
Organizational emotional memory plays an efficient role in persistence of organizational commitment via beliefs, symbols and rituals (Judge et al., 2009; Cherniss, 2010; Daus et al., 2012; Giorgi, 2013; Creed et al., 2014; Lopes, 2016). Such tools to be used with the aim of enhancing organizational emotional memory would also help improve organizational commitment (Kilduff et al., 2009; Sanchez-Burks and Huy, 2009; Joseph and Newman, 2010; Goodwin, 2011; Menges, 2012).

**H5:** Organizational emotional memory level is positively related to organizational commitment.

**H6:** Organizational emotional memory dispersion is positively related to organizational commitment.

**H7:** Organizational emotional memory clarity is positively related to organizational commitment.

Based on the hypothesis, the theoretical model, given in Figure 1, was developed:



**Figure 1: Theoretical Model**

With the aim of testing the hypothesis, a survey was developed in Likert scale. Organizational emotional memory scale was adapted based on Akgun et al. (2012) while organizational commitment and organizational performance scales were adapted based on Katsikea et al. (2011).

### 3. Data and Empirical Findings

#### 3.1. Data

The survey data was gathered from a total of 600 private bank employees in Istanbul between November 2017 and April 2018. Sample characteristics are provided in Table 1:

**Table 1: Sample (n=600)**

<b><i>Gender</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Female	42
Male	58
<b><i>Education</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Associate Degree	5
Undegraduate	57
Master / PhD	38
<b><i>Position</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Teller	4
Private Customer Representative / Advisor	12
Corporate Customer Representative / Advisor	12
Specialist and/or Assistant Specialist	39
Branch Manager and/or Assistant Branch Manager	33
<b><i>Personnel at Branch</i></b>	<b>%</b>
1 - 5	6
6 - 10	30
11 - 20	41
21 - 30	23
<b><i>Experience at Bank</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 1 year	7
1 - 5 years	22
6 - 10 years	41
11 - 20 years	27
21 - 30 years	3

The survey data based on the scale which consists of a total of 53 indicators/questions in 5 sub-factors, including Organizational Emotional Memory Level (14 indicators), Organizational Emotional Memory Dispersion (4 indicators), Organizational Emotional Memory Clarity (13 indicators), Organizational Commitment (7 indicators) and Organizational Performance (15 indicators).

Prior to employing model and hypothesis tests, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed with the aim of testing reliability, unidimensionality, discriminant validity and convergent validity of the scale. Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO) statistics for sampling adequacy was observed at 0.94%, fairly higher than the downer limit of 0.70 to be assumed as significant, while Bartlett's statistics of sphericity also pointed to a statistically significant positive relationship across the scale. Some 24 of total 53 indicators were eliminated due to unsatisfactory factor weights (lower than 0.50) or grouping under an unrelated sub-factor across 24 iterations of EFA and, as a result, a total of 29 indicators were identified to be distributed under five sub-factors as expected. Total variance explained by the sample stood at 54%, higher than the downer limit of 50%.

Following the EFA, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed. Two more indicators were dropped due to low factor weight (less than 0.6) as a result of the first CFA, and, after iterating the analysis, it was observed that CFA stats satisfy the downer limits set by Hair et al. (2010).

Table 2 shows the goodness of fit indices of the scale:

**Table 2: Goodness of Fit Indices of the Scale**

	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	GFI	NFI	RMSEA
<b>Results</b>	3,74	0,917	0,861	0,866	0,068
<b>Limits (Hair et al., (2010))</b>	<5	>0.90	>0.80	>0.80	<0.08

Moreover, two-factor model was employed with the aim of evaluating discriminant validity of the indicators. A total of 33 models were developed and a total of 66 pairs of comparisons were evaluated, and, as a result, chi-square ( $\Delta\chi^2$ ) changes in each model were observed as statistically significant ( $\Delta\chi^2 > 3.84$ ) with respect to Bagozzi et al. (1999).

Following the EFA and CFA, reliability analysis were also employed and it was observed that test results were statistically significant. Results of reliability tests are presented in Table 3:

**Table 3: Reliability Analysis Results**

Factors	Number of Indicators	Cronbach's Alfa (>0.70)	CR (>0.70)	AVE (>0.50)
Organizational Emotoinal Memory Level	4	0,818	0,803	0,526
Organizational Emotional Memory Clarity	6	0,845	0,832	0,561
Organizational Emotional Memory Dispersion	4	0,864	0,805	0,54
Organizational Performance	10	0,922	0,923	0,581
Organizational Commitment	4	0,769	0,707	0,534

### 3.2. Empirical Findings

Correlation analysis showed that factors were positively correlated to each other. Results of correlation analysis are presented at Table 4:

**Table 4: Correlation Analysis Results**

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>OEMD</i>	<i>OEMC</i>	<i>OEML</i>	<i>OC</i>	<i>OP</i>
<i>OEMD</i>	4,3559	0,59631	1	.487**	.489**	.414**	.73**
<i>OEMC</i>	4,5425	0,42829	.487**	1	.332**	.415**	.603**
<i>OEML</i>	4,4992	0,45561	.489**	.332**	1	.535**	.449**
<i>OC</i>	4,5532	0,44288	.414**	.415**	.535**	1	.397**
<i>OP</i>	4,4573	0,47266	.73**	.603**	.449**	.397**	1

\*\* Pearson value is statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ .

As the correlation analysis supported the idea that sub-factors are positively correlated to each other, the model was tested. GFI value was observed at 0.861 (higher than 0.80), CMIN/DF value was 3.744 (lower than 5), RMSEA value was 0.068 (lower than 0.08), NFI value was 0.866 (higher than 0.8) and CFI value was 0.917 (higher than 0.90). As all indicators satisfy the upper and downer limits, the model has acceptable goodness of fit.

The results of the hypothesis tests are presented in Table 5:

**Table 5: Hypothesis Tests Results**

Hypothesis	Path	Path Values	Results
H1	Organizational Commitment → Organizational Performance	0.18***	Supported
H2	Organizational Emotional Memory Level → Organizational Performance	0.16***	Supported
H3	Organizational Emotional Memory Dispersion → Organizational Performance	0.624***	Supported
H4	Organizational Emotional Memory Clarity → Organizational Performance	0.356***	Supported
H5	Organizational Emotional Memory Level → Organizational Commitment	0.54***	Supported
H6	Organizational Emotional Memory Dispersion → Organizational Commitment	0.12***	Supported
H7	Organizational Emotional Memory Clarity → Organizational Commitment	0.288***	Supported

X<sup>2</sup>=1273.108, df=340, x<sup>2</sup>/df=3.744, CFI=0.917, GFI=0.861, NFI=0.866, RMSEA=0.068

\*\*\* p<0.01

As a result of the hypothesis tests, it was shown that 1-) organizational commitment is positively related to organizational performance, 2-) organizational emotional memory level is positively related to organizational performance, 3-) organizational emotional memory dispersion is positively related to organizational performance, 4-) organizational emotional memory clarity is positively related to organizational



performance, 5-) organizational emotional memory level is positively related to organizational commitment, 6-) organizational emotional memory dispersion is positively related to organizational commitment, and 7-) organizational emotional memory clarity is positively related to organizational commitment.

#### 4. Conclusion

This research's most important contribution to the literature is that it showed organizational emotional memory along with its three sub-components of organizational emotional memory level, organizational emotional memory dispersion and organizational emotional memory clarity, organization commitment and organizational performance are positively correlated. Current management perspectives see human resources as the most important part of an organization. As organizations operate under rising severe competition conditions, the importance of human resources management practices become vital to continue operations. In this article, organizational emotional memory and organizational commitment were shown to have a direct impact on organizational performance. Organizations could employ human resources management policies to improve organizational emotional memory and organizational commitment of stakeholders within the context of organizational performance improvement measures.

This research has time, location and sectoral limitations. The survey methodology also carries its own limitations in objectively reflecting the real situation while it is also impossible to assure that participants have provided accurate answers. Further research could be employed with the aim of expanding time, location and sectoral scope. All dependent and independent indicators within the scope of the research carry the potential to differentiate across time frames. Expanding time horizon would enable researchers to reach more general conclusion. The research is also limited to employees of some certain private banks in Istanbul. Expanding the research throughout other banks, other cities as well as other sectors would also help for more consistent conclusions. Including public bank employees would also help for more accurate results since they have generally longer experience in their institutions, they join at earlier ages to their institutions compared to private bank employees and they generally spend their whole carriers in a single institution. Meanwhile, public banks have longer traditions compared to private lenders, and also, the state culture supports the expectations over possibly higher levels of organizational emotional memory and organizational commitment to be observed. However, bureaucratic problems would create other kinds of limitations.

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