



THE EFFECTS OF THE 1999 EARTHQUAKES AND THEIR AFTERMATH ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

(1999 DEPREMİ VE SONRASINDA YAŞANILANLARIN OKUL
YÖNETİCİLERİNİN ÖRGÜTSEL BAĞLILIKLARINA ETKİSİ)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to reveal what school administrators did during and after the 1999 earthquake and to investigate the effect of their actions on their commitment to their schools. The school directors in Bolu formed the universe of this study. The sampling consists of 12 directors selected. The data collection instrument was a scale aimed at to determine the adverse effects caused by the earthquake and the "Semi-structured Interview Technique". The interviews were recorded on cassettes, entered into a computer and interpreted using the "Content Analysis Technique". All the schools involved in the study had been physically damaged, and the psychology of the teachers and students' were negatively affected. Taking into consideration the fact that the directors are civil servants, the time they spend in their schools and city, and the reasons for not leaving; it is seen that they do not only show continuity commitment but also normative and emotional commitment to their institutions.

Key Words: Organization, organizational commitment, school director, earthquake.

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı 1999 depremini yaşayan okul yöneticilerinin, deprem anında ve sonrasında yaptıklarını ortaya çıkartabilmek ve bu durumun yöneticilerin örgütsel bağlılığı üzerindeki etkisini belirleyebilmektir. Bu çalışmanın evrenini, Bolu ili merkezindeki ortaöğretim kurumları yöneticileri oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın örneklemini 12 yönetici oluşturmaktadır. Veri toplama aracı olarak depremin bireyler üzerindeki etkilerini belirleyen bir ölçek ile "Yarı Yapılandırılmış Görüşme Tekniği" kullanılmıştır. Görüşmelerde kasetlere kaydedilen ses kayıtları bilgisayar ortamına aktarılarak "İçerik Analizi Tekniği" ile çözümlenmiştir. Birisi hariç bütün yöneticiler depremi yaşamış ve tamamının okulu, fiziksel mekân ve öğrenci-öğretmenlerin psikolojisi açısından olumsuz etkilenmiştir. Bu durum yöneticilerle bölgedeki öğretmenleri birbirlerine yakınlaştırmış, okula karşı bağlılıklarını artırmıştır. Yöneticilerin kamu çalışanı olması, kıdemleri, okullarında ve yaşadıkları şehirde geçirdikleri süre ile ayrılmama sebepleri birlikte göz önüne alındığında örgütlerine devamlılık bağlılığı göstermelerinin yanı sıra normatif ve duygusal bağlılık duydukları belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Örgüt, örgütsel bağlılık, okul yöneticisi, deprem.

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INTRODUCTION

This study is based on the current reflections of the results and affects of the successive earthquakes experienced in 1999 in Turkey (Gölcük, Düzce, Bolu). It is believed that the results obtained from this study will provide guidance for school directors to take the required precautions for the schools located in seismic zones. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and fires are socially and naturally unplanned situations that affect organizations, and managements have difficulties in controlling their effects. Moreover, as such events require very different types of management from that of normal situations, the managers' importance increases (Savery & Syme, 1996). Material incentives such as premium and pay raises, organizational leadership, balance between private life and working life, personal characteristics, general management policies, in-service training opportunities (Stum, 1999) and the relationships between the director and workers are important factors affecting organizational commitment (Gilbert, 1999). In an organizational setting where an earthquake is experienced, it seems to be more difficult for the employees to be committed to their organization than it is for the employees of an organization where the desired conditions prevail. When it is considered that the problems appearing with the earthquakes of 17 August and 12 November 1999 have had negative influences on all the institutions and employees in the places where the earthquakes were experienced, organizational commitment has gained extra importance. On such occasions, employees are expected to exhibit better performances to achieve individual and organizational objectives than they are required to in normal conditions. In such cases, the behavior of the managers, in addition to managerial decisions, has vital influence on the organizational commitment of the employees.

According to Marrow (Oliver, 1990), in its widest definition, organizational commitment, which has over 25 definitions, includes the idea of faithfulness and commitment of the individual to the organization (Morris et al, 1993). Organizational commitment, defined as the degree of identity unity of the worker with his/her organization, his/her being willing to continue to be a member of the organization (Davis & Newstrom, 1989), has a dynamic structure. According to Balay (2000), a worker feeling committed to his/her organization strongly believes in its objectives and values, and wholeheartedly supports the rules and expectations. Mowday et al. (1982) state that the indicators of organizational commitment are: approval of the objectives and values of the organization and feeling committed to them, putting forth effort for the organization to achieve its objectives, and having a strong willingness to stay as a member of the organization.

Organizational commitment is affected by a number factors which can be described as individual, organizational and non-organizational. These include factors such as the age and education level of the individual, the

administrative policies of the organization, the way it regards its employees, its human resources policies, the value judgements of the society in which the organization is found, legal regulations, and unions (Perçin, 2008; İnce & Gül, 2005; Özdevecioğlu, 2003).

Meyer and Allen (1997), on the other hand, divided organizational commitment into three different categories as emotional commitment, continuity commitment and normative commitment and these three types of commitment interact with each other (Chen & Francesco, 2003). The emotional commitment category refers to the desire and willingness to commit (Sezgin, 2010). Emotional commitment reflects workers emotional willingness to remain as members of the organization on their own volition (Meyer & Allen 1997), and is important for the workers to see themselves as a part of the organization (Boylu, Pelit & Güçer, 2007). In case of continuity commitment, workers consider the costs to be brought about by leaving the organization and they go on becoming a part of the organization due to an obligation (Meyer & Allen 1997). This type of commitment comes into being a result of the fear that one may lose his/her status, income etc. gained because of the efforts put forth and time spent in the job (Obeng & Ugboro, 2003). As it can be seen, continuity commitment is shown when it is felt necessary (Sezgin, 2010). In the case of normative commitment, on the other hand, workers believe that commitment is a requirement of ethical feeling of duty and that they should not leave the organization (Meyer & Allen 1997). Independent of the status and satisfaction provided by the organization over the years for themselves, workers think that it is true from ethical perspective to stay in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). In this type of commitment, it is believed that loyalty is important; hence, an ethical obligation is felt (Yalçın & İplik, 2005), and workers think that they are doing the right thing by staying (Obeng & Ugboro, 2003).

There are a number of positive outcomes resulting from organizational commitment. For example, the harmony between the individual and the organization is good; the desire of employees to leave the organization decreases, while the desire to stay rises; motivation, performance, job satisfaction and efficiency increases; effectiveness, and trust between individuals (Finegan, 2000; Culversan, 2002; Brown, 2003, Guatam et al., 2004; Marchiori & Henkin, 2004; Bayram, 2005). The organizational commitment being at the desired level and behavior of the employees are extremely important for administrators (Chen, Tsui & Farh, 2002). Employees, who believe that they are not appreciated by the organization, do not participate in decision-making process or are not provided with feedback about their performance show low commitment to the organization (Terzi & Kurt, 2005). Low organizational commitment results in rumors, objections, and complaints which can damage the organization (Çakır, 2007). Therefore,

effective use of human resources is of great importance for organizations to attain their objectives.

Extra importance is attached to school directors' objectives where the functions and characteristics of educational organizations are concerned. School directors having strong commitment to their schools make a great contribution to the attainment of the objectives. An employee committed to his/her institution can more easily feel intrinsically motivated to contribute to the objectives of the organization and is more likely to exhibit the performance expected from him/her. For a highly committed director to leave his/her organization is difficult, especially in times of hardship. Although there is an extensive amount of research in the literature dealing with managerial behavior and applications and their relationships with organizational commitment, there is a paucity of research investigating the effects of unexpected negative events, such as earthquakes, on the organizational commitment of managers. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the organizational commitment of the school directors who have experienced an earthquake.

The Purpose of the Study

The objective of the study is to reveal what the school directors did at the time of an earthquake and to determine the effects of this disaster on the directors' organizational commitment. To this aim, the current study searches for answers to the following questions:

- 1- What are the actions of the school directors during and after the earthquake and the changes in their schools?
- 2- What kinds of effects did the events during and following the earthquake have on the organizational commitment of the school directors?

METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out using the survey method. This research is a descriptive study which has utilized qualitative research techniques to reveal what school directors did at the time of an earthquake and to investigate the effects of the events on the organizational commitment of the directors. Qualitative research can be defined as research which uses qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interviews and analysis of documents in order to present concepts and events in their natural context in a realistic and holistic way (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). The interview technique was used in the current study.

Population and Sampling

The population of the study consists of the directors of the secondary schools working in the city of Bolu in the 2006-2007 school years. The study

participants were 12 directors randomly selected by means of the “Convenience Sample Method”. Interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis with the participants and code names were used to protect their identities.

Data Collection

The research data were collected by means of the semi-structured interview technique. The questions in semi-structured interviews are pre-determined and data is collected by means of these questions (Karasar, 1998). A semi-structured interview form was prepared by the researchers to determine what the school directors did during and after the earthquake and the effect of the earthquake on their organizational commitment.

This interview form was reviewed and necessary corrections were made by two experts in order to increase the internal validity. A pilot interview was carried out with one director, and this recorded interview was transcribed onto a computer and given to another expert in order to determine if the questions were clear and comprehensible and if the replies reflected the questions asked. In this way, the validity of the questions was determined. Internal validity in qualitative research is related to whether or not the data the researcher wishes to collect is really measured by the instrument or method used (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005).

Once it had been ascertained that the interview questions had gleaned the desired data, the data collection process went underway. The research data were collected by the researchers from the school directors at their schools at times convenient for them.

The questions were asked to the interviewees in the same order, and the interviewees were allowed to answer as detailed as they wished. They were also given the opportunity to express ideas of their own that they believed to be important. During the interview, it is the basic duty of the interviewer to ensure that the interviewee can answer comfortably, honestly and correctly (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). For this reason, the questions were asked in a conversational manner.

First personal information was collected, then the participants were requested to answer the five questions on the form designed to determine the negative effects of the earthquake. The questions were 5 point Likert-type with responses from “None” to “Completely”. This form was followed by the interview questions, given as follows:

1. What did you do at the time of the earthquake and after?
2. Have you thought of leaving the city because of the possibility of another earthquake?
3. If you had left after the earthquake, how would your professional life have been affected?

4. What has the effect of the expectation of an earthquake been on your work and school?
5. What are the factors behind your staying at the school in spite of the earthquake?
6. What does your school mean to you?

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Interviews were conducted with 12 school directors. The recorded interviews were analyzed by the researchers. No changes were made to the sound recordings, which were transcribed into electronic format in order by giving each interview a number. In each transcribed interview, the interviewee was given a number for each page starting from one. The data were then analyzed using the "Content Analysis Technique". According to Balçı (2001), content analysis is the process of quantifying what people have written by using a clearly defined coding system. The basic aim of content analysis is to transform verbal documents into quantitative data. After the interviews were transcribed, all the answers to the questions were dealt with one by one and coded. In order to increase the reliability of the coder and the coding, the data were read by different people. In this way, it was found that the inter-coder reliability had been ensured. After the mutual opinions of the interviewees had been gathered, and the number participants with similar opinions had been determined, they were shown as N=X (N=mutual opinion, X=number of interviewees). The emerging themes were interpreted together with the codes, and the results were presented in terms of the aims of the study. Quotes from the interview texts were used to support the interpretations of the researchers and to reflect the points of view of the participants. Quotations are given frequently in analyses to reflect in an effective way the opinions of the participants being interviewed or observed (Altunışık et al, 2001; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). Footnotes [Director-X] were given at the bottom of the text to show to which participant the notes belonged to. The data gathered from the questions were organized into groups to form internally meaningful wholes and gathered under specific themes in order for the reader to understand.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Relationship between Personal Information and Organizational Commitment

The directors were all male and above 45 years old. They all had more than 15 years of Professional experience; they had all been directors of their schools for over 10 years; they had worked in Bolu for over 15 years; 8 were from Bolu and 4 were not.

In the studies conducted so far, it has been accepted that age and length of service at the current institution are the most important indicators of

commitment to the organization (Cohen, 1993). This is because as the age of the worker increases, the material and spiritual gains also increase. In their study, Durna and Eren (2005) found that employees of educational institutions were more committed to their institutions than were those of other types and they showed a significant relationship between organizational commitment, age and experience. Other studies have shown that commitment is in a positive correlation between age and length of service (Angle and Perry, 1981; Onay-Özkaya et al., 2006). When the personal information of the directors involved in the current study was evaluated with the interview questions, it appeared that they were committed to their institutions.

The Negative Effects of the Earthquake on the Directors

Table1. The Negative Effects of the Earthquake on the Directors

Questions	None	A little	Some	A lot	Completely
1 How much physical damage did the earthquake do to your school?	5	5	1	1	-
2 How much stress and discomfort did you experience when some of your students were injured in the earthquake?	8	2	1	1	-
3 How much stress and discomfort did you experience when some of your colleagues were injured in the earthquake?	6	2	1	3	-
4 How much did working at school become difficult due to the earthquake?	-	1	2	8	1
5 Did the earthquake interrupt your educational activities?	1	7	3	1	-

While the earthquake caused “some” and “a lot” of damage to the schools of 2 directors, the other schools were not affected very much. The injuries of students and colleagues in the earthquake caused stress and discomfort in few of the directors. Apart from the school of one director, working became difficult and educational activities were interrupted because of the earthquake. In a study conducted by Akbaba-Altun (2005) with the school directors from the same region between January and May 2000 immediately after the earthquake, it was found that the directors experienced fear, panic, and stress due to the earthquake. The current study found that the directors experienced stress and discomfort, but at a low level. The reason for this could be that the effects of the earthquake had been forgotten over time

and the degree to which the earthquake had affected the schools. The findings showing the negative effect of the earthquake on the schools, the discomfort experienced and the interruption of educational activities parallel those found in the Akbaba-Altun (2005) study.

Findings Obtained from the Interviews and Their Interpretations

1. What the Directors Did During and Following the Earthquake

All but one of the directors experienced the earthquake (N=11). Immediately after the earthquake, the directors left the building and took their wives and children to secure places (N=5), then hurried to their schools and dormitories and took the students out to assemble in the gardens (N=6). The directors stated that they sent some students to their families and sent the rest of them to their hometowns (N=5). After taking the necessary precautions, they detected the amount of damage to the buildings; arranged places for families, teachers and students to stay in the school gardens, prefabricated houses and cars; and had tents put up and blankets distributed (N=7). The directors stated that they declared a holiday after the earthquake, but they themselves stayed at the schools and they sent the teachers to their hometowns (N=5). On inspection of the reasons of the directors' for staying in Bolu, it was observed that they were in parallel to the director's personal characteristics. Some of the directors' opinions are as follows:

“(...) In cooperation with the crisis center of the Ministry of Education, we prepared emergency plans and then put up tents in the garden (...)” [Director-5].

“(...) there were only school management and administrative personnel left we needed to decide what to do in these conditions (...)” [Director-8].

The directors stated that, despite the threat of other earthquakes, they set up tent classes in the gardens of the schools, and when they started the educational activities, they called back the teachers they had sent to their hometowns and they gave instruction in the tents (N=5). Yet, because of the inadequacy of the conditions in the tents (cold, possibility of poisoning from gas-heaters) and lack of teachers, the quality of the instruction was low (N=3). One of the directors stated that as they could foresee these difficulties, he transferred the students to another school outside the city. The directors reported that as of March they started normal education and make-up courses were organized, but also that these make-up courses were also inefficient.

“(...) some courses are called intensified make-up courses, but they did not work as planned (...)” [Director-8].

2. The Reasons for the Directors' Staying in Bolu

All but one of the directors stated that they never thought of leaving Bolu. The director who had to leave stated that he left not because he wanted

to, but because of the health problems of his son, and he added that he then came back. The directors stated that due to the earthquake many people had to leave Bolu. However, they did not do so because of a sense of responsibility (N=2), a desire to be in Bolu (N=5), not finding it ethical to leave at the time of hardship (N=4), and because they had spent most of their teaching time in Bolu and it was difficult to give up routines (N=5). Some related opinions are as follows:

“(...) I have been earning my living here for 12 years (...) it is difficult to leave my colleagues in these conditions, and the captain should be the last one to leave the ship (...)” [Director-1].

“(...) I had completed my 25 years of service and I could have retired (...)” [Director-2].

“(...) it is not possible to leave your homeland when the people need you, not material things, but lives are important here (...)” [Director-4].

“(...) we are the children of this country and we are here to serve (...)” [Director-5].

3. How Their Lives would have been Affected if They had Left the City after the Earthquake

The directors stated that if they had decided to leave the school, they would have felt bad as they would have left the others alone (N=5). It is seen that the directors would have felt guilty if they had left their schools. This can be an indicator of the normative commitment of the directors to their schools. On the other hand, they stated that if they had left, they would have been able to work in other schools in better conditions as teachers or retire and then find a job in other institutions of education but did not (N=6). Hence, it is understood that even in bad conditions the directors do not want to leave their schools; that is, they are committed to their schools. Some directors expressed their opinions about this issue as follows:

“(...) there will be many negative changes in my life if I quit working in this school (...)” [Director-2].

“(...) we do not have any concern about being unemployed, so if I leave, I will work in the field of education again (...)” [Director-4].

“(...) I have been working in this school for 30 years; we are ready to face hardship (...)” [Director-7].

“(...) I would be very upset if I leave, I could find a job everywhere, but it is an emotionally sensitive issue (...)” [Director-10].

As can be seen, the directors preferred to stay in their institutions due to a sense of loyalty, responsibility, and duty. Benkhoff (1997) reports that employees working longer in the organization are more committed. Wasti (2000) and Suliman and Iles (2000) state that with the increase in the length of

service and amount of efforts, continuity commitment increases. These findings are supported with the findings obtained in the present study related to the connection between the commitment and the behaviors of the directors, their length of service in their current institutions and their reasons for staying in the city of Bolu. Three of the directors stated that most of the people leaving the city came back when the effects of the earthquake alleviated, another three directors drew the attention to the fact that Turkey is an earthquake region and hence the risk and fear of earthquakes is felt everywhere. The directors stated that they worked in close cooperation with the remaining teachers and dealt with the issues together (N=2). The directors also stated that this situation has contributed to commitment to the school and improved the culture of the institution.

4. The Factors that Made them Stay at their Schools in spite of the Earthquaker

Despite the possibility of an earthquake, the directors tend to see their schools as their homes and are very attached to them (N=3). The directors stated the following factors as influential on their decision to stay: wherever one goes, one will face the risk of experiencing an earthquake (N=3); being in Bolu and serving there is important (N=3); it is destiny (N=3); and it is difficult to leave the setting which they are used to (N=3). 8 of the directors were from Bolu. These data indicate that the directors have some reasons for staying at their schools and they concentrate on similar reasons.

“(...) primarily, this is my home, how can I leave it? This is my culture, values and existence, everything (...)” [Director-1].

“(...) it was possible to show the earthquake as my excuse but this is not my style (...)” [Director-4].

“(...) firstly, the city of Bolu is our city, the school students are injured and it is not right to leave, staying here does not show that I am a hero there is something to be done, and it will be done (...)” [Director-7].

“(...) I believe in faith, if the time to die comes, it can be other thing it should not be the earthquake (...)” [Director-8].

According to Gibson et al. (2003), employees with a high level of commitment have a lower tendency to leave the organization and look for employment in other organizations. In addition to this, a known but not very satisfactory setting may be preferable to an unknown one (Onay-Özkaya et al., 2006). This could be related to the cultural dimension defined by Hofstede (1980, cited in Onay-Özkaya et al., 2006) as avoidance of the unknown. The findings of these studies and the reasons put forward by the directors are in parallel with the findings of the current study. In a similar way, Wasti (2000) found that as Turkish employees do not like ambiguity and change, they feel continuity commitment to their organizations.

5. Changes Taking Place in the Schools since the Earthquake

Two schools were demolished, prefabricated buildings were added to five schools and the necessary maintenance was performed. Although no damage occurred to some schools, nobody wanted to enter the buildings for psychological reasons; but with the increase in the problems experienced in the tents and after receiving reports stating that the buildings were safe to enter, they had to do so (N=3). One of the directors expressed his opinions about the negative psychological effects of the earthquake on the students and teachers as follows:

“(...) in case of any indication of the earthquake, you can see the signs of fear on their faces (...)” [Director-1].

The directors stated that although they did not experience the problem of allowances after the earthquake, the decision-making system collapsed, and shortages emerged, students exhibited behavioral abnormalities, and the number of the students and teachers dropped (N=7). In her study, Akbaba-Altun (2005) found similar results, and states instructional losses and psychological handicaps as the short-term effects of the earthquake in this region, in addition to reporting that directors did similar things. As it can be seen, the school directors continued their duties for the continuity of instruction in spite of the negative conditions. The directors stated that they were vigilant during the first years after the earthquake, but that events were forgotten quickly (N=5). In addition, they stated that they had got training and psychological support from experts to learn how to come through an earthquake with the least damage (N=3), and that they had carried out drills with plans and projects (N=5). This shows that the directors were prepared for an earthquake. However, there were also directors (N=3) who said that they still lived in fear of an earthquake. The opinions of the directors exhibit similarity:

“(...) due to fear of earthquake, the doors of all the classes and main door of the school were open (...) you fell afraid for 1-2 years but then you behave as if the earthquake never happened (...)” [Director-1].

“(...) the effects of it acutely felt in the following six months (...) now the people have forgotten but there is still fear (...)” [Director-4].

“(...) sometimes we feel as if an earthquake was happening (...) every year we have earthquake practice (...)” [Director-10].

Some of the directors remarked that they overcame the problems at schools through warm relations (N=2), and some stated that they used their personal relations (N=3). This may indicate that the teachers also participated in the decision-making processes. Avolio et.al. (2004) reports that encouraging participation in decisions made in the organization and showing respect to employees' ideas improve the employees' commitment to the organization.

6. The Effect on What the School Mean to the Directors and the Directors' Commitment to their Schools

Two of the directors commented that they view the school as their home, two of them as a life style, three stated that the school means everything to them, and two view the school as the source of their income. Moreover, the directors have the tendency to view the students as their own children.

“(...) they have great importance to me; they are my children (...)” [Director-3].

“(...) I have always seen them as my third child (...)” [Director-4].

“(...) the school is like my own child (...)” [Director-5].

“(...) my school is as valuable to me as my family, the students are my own children and my teacher colleagues are the members of my family (...)” [Director-9].

The directors said that they felt committed to their schools, not because of their position, but because of their responsibility (N=5), and that commitment in administration was high (N=4). They added that as they have been working as directors for long years, they see their schools like their families and so feel more committed (N=3). The directors expressed their opinions about this issue as follows:

“(...) Even if I were a teacher I would feel in the same way (...) being a directors brings some extra responsibilities, you are responsible against people and institutions (...)” [Director-1].

“(...) If I was a teacher, I would not be so busy, but if I were here as a teacher, I would feel in the same way (...)” [Director-2].

“(...) the thing that is indispensable is not being director but the school itself, even if we left the position, we would be teachers (...) being a director creates an obligatory commitment (...)” [Director-8].

The data obtained suggest that the directors attach a special meaning to their schools and they regard their school duties as their personal duties. This shows their emotional commitment to the school and the feeling that the school is a means of making their living is an indication of their normative commitment. Giving priority to the job, loving it, taking it seriously, showing commitment, and working in a self-sacrificing manner are the behavioral norms and values showing the collectivist culture of organizations (Uyguç ve Çımrın, 2004). It is observed in the present study that the directors pay attention to these behavioral norms and values. Furthermore, in collectivist cultures like that of Turkey, employment and working are given a lot of importance (Uyguç, 2003), and employees who are fulfilled with their work display more organizational commitment than those who are not fulfilled (Çetin, 2006). Two of the directors stated that although they had the opportunity to retire, they did not want to do so.

School directors and teachers in Turkey work under the guarantee of the state, hence, they have long-term job security, and unless they commit serious disciplinary crimes, they will not face the threat of losing their jobs (Onay-Özkaya, et.al. 2006). Employment guarantee granted by state institutions leads to the result that the state employees do not want to change their jobs; moreover, they have retirement rights and career opportunities, all these factors improve their continuity commitment which has a great contribution to general organizational commitment (Durna, Eren, 2005). Wasti's study (2000) revealed that satisfaction from the general structure of the job and collectivist organizational culture is among the factors affecting emotional commitment. In cultures where great importance is attached to collectivism, the individuals describe themselves as the parts of the institution (Aycan, 2000). In another study, it was found that Turkish employees prefer family-like settings where they are cared about to individualistic organizational cultures where individualistic contributions are valued (Onay-Özkaya et al., 2006). These results from the literature concur with the findings of the present study.

RESULTS

On evaluation of the relationship between the personal characteristics of the directors (age, seniority in the profession, seniority in administration) and the interview questions, it was observed that the directors were committed to their organizations. The earthquake caused physical damage to 5 of the schools and a variety of damage to the others. Damage control was carried out on the buildings and places to stay were arranged immediately after the earthquake. Although school was cancelled, the directors stayed at school and experienced stress and discomfort. The earthquake disrupted education and instruction.

The directors set up tents and used them like classrooms, but the physical conditions in the tents and shortage of teachers affected education negatively. Make-up lessons were ineffective. Though they were afraid of and psychologically not ready for entering the buildings, they had to do so. Education given in tents led to negative results and behavioral anomalies in the students. The schools did not experience the problem of allowance, but their decision-making mechanisms collapsed. They received training and psychological support from experts. Many problems were solved through the cooperation between the teachers and directors. The problems experienced improved the affiliation between the teachers and directors, and commitment to the school. Over time, expectation for another earthquake has diminished.

The directors never thought of leaving Bolu for several reasons: sense of responsibility, being from Bolu, not finding it ethical to leave at the time of hardships; and as they spent most of their teaching time in Bolu, they found it difficult to give up routines. If they had decided to leave, they would have felt

guilty and irresponsible. This is an indication of their normative commitment. The factors influential on their decision to stay are as follows: they saw their schools as their homes; they liked the city; wherever they went, they would face the risk of experiencing an earthquake; being in Bolu and serving there was important; such situations were destiny and it was difficult to leave the setting which they were used to. The directors viewed the school as their own house, their life style, the way of earning their living. They saw the students as their own children. They primarily saw themselves as teachers and thought that being a director is time-consuming. Being a director did not have a direct influence on the commitment to the school, but it required them to take more responsibilities.

It is seen that the directors are committed to their organizations for various reasons, such as being a state employee, their seniority in their jobs, time spent at school and in the city etc. Being in administration for a long time and viewing their schools as their families increase their commitment. Their not leaving despite the risk of an earthquake, their not retiring though it is possible, and coming up with some reasons to stay at the school are another indications of their commitment. If they had decided to leave, they would have felt guilty and irresponsible. This shows their normative commitment. Their not liking change is a sign of continuity commitment.

The support they received in their schools satisfied them and increased their emotional commitment. That is, they have both normative commitment and emotional commitment to their job. In short, the earthquakes experienced did not affect their commitment negatively; on the contrary, it had a positive contribution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations can be made in the light of the research findings: School administrators can be made more prepared for unexpected events such as natural disasters by means of in-service training. Alternative earthquake plans should be developed and distributed to schools. Such plans could help administrators should they face such circumstances. Training could be provided for school employees to make them aware of what should be done in the case of earthquakes and other natural disasters and how to overcome them. Psychological counseling should be provided for school employees experiencing disasters such as earthquakes.

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